VOICES FROM THE NEAR EAST

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CHRISTIAN VOICES AROUND THE WORLD

VOICES FROM THE NEAR EAST

Chapters by a Group of Nationals Interpreting the Christian Movement

Assembled and edited by
MILTON STAUFFER
Educational Secretary Student Volunteer Movement

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CHRISTIAN VOICES AROUND THE WORLD SERIES

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PREFACE

THE present student generation in North America is no longer willing to depend entirely on the foreign missionary for its understanding of Christian movements in so-called mission fields. For practically the same reasons many missionaries are beginning to feel that they have been speaking for the Christian converts of other lands long enough. In the judgment of both these groups the day for the voice of nationals to be heard in our Western churches is at hand. That there are Christian leaders today in almost every land who are sufficiently able to interpret the Christianity of their communities to parent communities in the West, is living proof of the prophetic insight of pioneer missionaries who long ago by faith first caught the vision of this day. To their faithful witness and early sowing, this series entitled *Christian Voices Around the World* is affectionately dedicated.

As never before, the young people of our North American churches and colleges find themselves sympathetic toward the national and racial aspirations of other peoples. Their sympathy leads them to question some of the aims and methods in the Christian missionary enterprise which appear to ignore or run counter to these aspirations. Many of them have

heard their own and foreign fellow-students counsel immediate discontinuance of foreign missions as now conducted, and even express doubt as to whether the missionary enterprise can be longer justified. However able the missionaries may be to deal with perplexities like these, they cannot satisfy the desire of those who are disturbed, to hear the opinion of nationals as well. Not until the Christian youth of North America are convinced that the foreign missionary enterprise is fulfilling, in the judgment of indigenous Christian leaders, the largest needs of the peoples it means to serve, will they be enthusiastically behind it, at home or abroad.

This *Christian Voices Around the World* series has been initiated and sponsored by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. We have been encouraged from the beginning by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, representing missionaries and foreign mission board secretaries, by the Council of Christian Associations, representing students and student leaders, and by the Missionary Education Movement, representing the mission boards in their cooperative educational work among the churches. In order that the books might be just as readily available to the young people of the churches as to college students, the Missionary Education Movement offered to publish the series, and

has generously put all of its resources for editing and circulation into the enterprise.

In view of the purpose of this series and of the character of the manuscripts a statement of editorial policy is due both authors and readers. Some chapters were written in English, and others came to us as rough translations, manifesting in both cases varying stages of knowledge of the language. Many chapters were in uncertain stages so far as arrangement of material and literary quality are concerned. But more of them than the average reader might suppose were submitted in such form as to require surprisingly few editorial changes. Wherever the grammatical construction in the original was obviously wrong or obscured or impaired the thought, I have not hesitated to change, even drastically, both construction and phraseology. Verbal substitutions in the interest of clarity have also been made. Frequently the idiomatic terms which seemed to have been intended have been supplied. Wherever the meaning could not be determined, rather than risk misrepresenting the author the part was deleted. There have also been the usual editorial exigencies relating to space. Having said this, let me hasten to add that scrupulous effort has been made to preserve the integrity of thought and the individuality of each manuscript. The constant endeavor has been to safe-

guard both the intention of the writer and the underlying spirit of the series.

Annotations by way of directing the reader to supplementary material, or defining the terms used, or suggesting other points of view in the interests of a more balanced presentation, have been omitted. For so many years the missionary's point of view has been presented without annotations from nationals that it now seems only fair to apply the same method the other way around.

Readers will discover defects inevitable to a symposium. There is repetition because of overlapping ground and the inability of the writers to consult together. The contributions are not of equal literary quality, and wide differences of intellectual content exist between chapters. The material is not always what missionaries themselves would have presented, nor is it always the most significant with reference to present phases of missionary interest in North America. On the other hand it is exactly what we have asked for, an honest revelation of what Christian nationals are thinking and saying among themselves. No attempts have been made to reconcile conflicting opinions. Wherever possible the edited manuscripts have been submitted with the originals to consultants from the country concerned for scrutiny of changes made. Obviously the author of each chapter is alone responsible for the facts and the opinions stated.

Voices from the Near East is one in this series of six volumes. In assembling its chapters we were helped greatly by Dr. James H. Nicol of Beirut, Syria, missionary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and chairman of the Christian Council for Western Asia and North Africa. After consultation with fellow-missionaries and Christian nationals Dr. Nicol selected the authors, encouraged them to undertake what must have seemed an indefinite or impossible task, and with the aid of native scholars translated several of the chapters from Arabic into English. The attempt was made to choose authors who have the confidence of the Christian churches in their land, and some knowledge of what these churches would say to the churches of the West if they could become articulate.

The Near East presents such a complexity of conditions, social, political and religious, that it is impossible to give an adequate picture in any single symposium. Those who desire a more general understanding should consult such contemporary works as *The Moslem World of Today*, John R. Mott, Editor; *The Moslem Looks at the Future*, T. H. P. Sailer; and *Young Islam on Trek*, Basil Mathews, not neglecting the current magazines and the daily press.

MILTON STAUFFER

New York
October, 1927

I

OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

THE territory with which we are concerned is that part of the Near East generally known as the Arabic-speaking world, or more particularly Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Egypt. Perhaps we shall not be far from the truth if we say that the Semitic element is predominant in these countries and that the inhabitants in general belong to the Semitic stock. In former times these lands were the dwelling place of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Phœnicians, Arameans, Canaanites, Arabs, Jews and other Semitic peoples. The ancient Egyptians, though not, strictly speaking, of the Semitic family, were nevertheless closely connected with it. Dr. Elliott Smith, after examining thousands of skulls and mummies in upper Egypt, discovered marked characteristics of the Africo-Arabic-Mediterranean race. If to this fact is added what Egyptologists say of the relationship between the Egyptian and Semitic languages, and what history affirms concerning the emigration of Semites to Egypt from Syria and other places, the partnership of ancient Egypt with both Syria and Mesopotamia in their old Semitic heritage appears most likely.

In any case, when we come down to more modern times we see all of these Eastern peoples held together by a linguistic bond stronger than that of common origins. The Semitic Near East, situated between Persia and the Mediterranean, was composed originally of many nations with differing languages and religions. These were subjected to successive conquests by the Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Roman and other nations, which, notwithstanding their strength, were never able to bring about real unity or to force the mixed inhabitants into a single mold. In consequence they remained essentially different, with rival languages, until from among the Semites themselves one single people, the Arabs, achieved the unity others dreamed about.

The Arabs rose under the banner of Islam, attacked the Persian and Roman empires in the East, took away from them the Semitic areas, and in process of time welded the whole into a single magnificent unity which we call today the Arabic world. That the Arabic language did not secure a permanent hold anywhere except in countries originally Semitic every student of the Near East knows. For while the language spread quickly into Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan, eastward to India and westward to the islands of the Mediterranean and to Spain and Portugal, still it was not long after the decadence of Arab power that it shrunk back to its present limits.

Nor did it take any permanent root as a native tongue except in the countries under discussion.

For twelve centuries the Near East has known no other language as its everyday medium of exchange except Arabic. This the people speak, and in its literature they take great pride. What the foreign conquerors failed to do, the Arabs accomplished. They took all the previous national and linguistic differences and made from these materials a new nationalism, its warp the Semitic religion, and its woof the Arabic tongue.

So we might speak of "the heir and the heritage" of the Near East, meaning by the first all the Arabic-speaking peoples, and by the second all that has come down to them from their old Semitic origins and their own peculiar environment, together with all that has been and is rightly theirs through Arabic civilization. Moslems, Christians and Jews have in this a common heritage, and all of them, as appears from pre-Islamic history, are rightful heirs to the Arabic tongue.

We shall divide the main subject of this chapter into three parts, treating in turn the spiritual, the intellectual, and the social heritage. It is clear that were we to attempt to discuss this subject adequately, it would require a book in itself. Our chief purpose here is to take a general view, and show what the

Arab peoples have a right to claim as their heritage from the past.

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First, our spiritual heritage. From the Jews and the Arabs of the Semitic world have come three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Without doubt the Semites were the first to give expression to the monotheistic idea of God. This idea is very ancient in their history, going back to earliest times. The fact has been confirmed by discoveries of archeologists, who are of the opinion that this tendency to monotheism was apparent even in the days of heathen Babylon. Deutsch says that the emigration of Abraham stood for nothing less than a higher form of monotheism which had sprung up from old Babylonian tendencies. Renan in his *History of Semitic Languages* declares that "the names of God known in the Semitic language are all singular, showing that the god is one, and this is inseparable from monotheistic Semitic nature. And if it be said that some Semitic branches, such as the Phœnicians, Babylonians, and Arabs, worshiped many gods, perhaps that was due largely to the influence of foreign nations with which these groups had come in contact. Anyway, the Semites were the first monotheists, and the originators of the monotheistic faiths." Robertson Smith in his *Religion of the Semites* shows how this development in religion naturally

followed the development of the idea of absolute monarchy among the Semites, as contrasted with the idea of aristocracy among the Greeks. He also points out that in Greece any idea of the unity of God was only a philosophical speculation, while the Hebrews conceived of the one true God as the king of absolute justice, the national God of Israel, destined because of his character to become the God of all the earth.

Judaism arose in Palestine and there established its center of influence and power, but it did not spread among heathen people except to a very limited extent. Persecution was the main reason for its leaving its original home. From the days of Babylon to the time of the Greeks and Romans, and even among the Christians of the Middle Ages, one reads of a continual series of persecutions which ended with the scattering of the Jews all over the world. Zionism may be regarded as a reaction against persecution and exile, strengthened by diplomacy for the realization of a special program.

Christianity originated in the heart of Judaism as a reform movement. It soon became independent, spread westward, and there it first met with strong persecution from the Romans. Later it conquered its own persecutors and became the religion of the Roman Empire. In the Orient, on the other hand, it was limited to the shores of the Mediterranean and a few other sections.

Then Islam appeared in Arabia, spread to Asia and Africa, wielded its influence east and west from India to the Mediterranean, and followed the southern Mediterranean shores as far as the Atlantic Ocean.

These three religions, having about 800,000,000 followers today, are Semitic in origin, and the Semites are the rightful heirs to all the characteristics, both spiritual and social, that these religions have handed down. We shall speak of the most important of these characteristics.

The first characteristic is the exaltation of God and subordination of nature. The spiritual tendency which pictures God as a great king directing the whole universe with his absolute will, makes the Oriental minimize natural laws and be indifferent to their permanency. This is also true of every Westerner who has truly imbibed this oriental spirit. As the Arabic poet says, "Everything in nature is passing, except God," and as an old Arab preacher has said, "Life is only a passage, and the coming world is the real abode." There is a well-known saying in Arabic, "Everything will pass away, and nothing will remain but the face of God." Also, "Live in this world as if you are to die tomorrow, and live for the next world as if you will live forever." Passages like these could easily be multiplied from the Psalms and other Semitic literature. All such sayings indicate what Semitic Orientals think of God

and nature, and it is not strange that anyone who has such a view of life should believe in supernatural occurrences and conceive of God as able and willing to upset all natural laws. History shows that the contribution of the Semitic peoples has been their spiritual evaluation of life, and the exalted place they have given to ethical principles.

The second characteristic which the three religions have handed down is belief in predestination and fatalism. We have said that the East in general exalts God rather than nature, but it does not stop there. The Semite usually depends upon God in everything and ascribes to him activity in every smallest detail of his life. This dependence, which resembles the dependence of the child on his father, seems less apparent in places where Orient and Occident have reacted on each other, though it is still strong in typical Semitic districts of the Near East. If you ask a person, "How are you?" he answers, "God be praised." When he undertakes anything he says, "In the name of God." If he has been cautioned about a rival in business he will say, "God is the giver." When he opens his shop early in the morning he says, "Oh, Helper! Oh, Giver!" This is a beautiful conception of the relation of life to God. God is everything. He is the source of every activity, and if this belief is genuine, there follows the corollary that all of our deeds are the outcome

of God's absolute will. This leads to belief in predestination and fatalism, beliefs which are strongest among Moslems, who stand out as the conservative element in religious views and practices.

The third characteristic is belief in inspiration and prophecy. Nobody denies that there have appeared among non-Semites many spiritual teachers who have been raised to divine heights by their followers. None, however, but the Semites, and especially the Hebrews and the Arabs, can boast of a long series of prophets who have been considered by all civilized nations as beacon lights of spiritual truth. These prophets have been raised by the monotheistic Semites to the place of mediator between God and men. They hear what others cannot hear and see what others cannot see. They are always in contact with the unseen world. The Semites include in inspiration the imparting of God's wish directly to his prophets, and from prophet to man through the sacred books. This leads them to regard these books as divine, God's only directly spoken word. Thus Jews, Christians and Moslems still believe in their sacred books as divinely inspired. Moslems not only believe that the Koran is the word of God, but also that it is written in God's own language and forever represents the highest standard of expression. Any view contrary to this is not oriental but Western. It should be mentioned here that leaders of the monotheistic re-

ligions have not sprung up as defenders of religious traditions but always as reformers and prophets who were in open rebellion against stagnation and waywardness. They are really propagators of great ideals which are still regarded by us as the highest conceivable.

The fourth characteristic is the belief in an eternal abode of happiness hereafter. Faith in an omnipotent God, a loving Father, who is expecting us on the other shore, ready to usher us into the eternal abode of happiness, must naturally lead every true believer to be reconciled with life however unsatisfactory, since its end cannot be anything but joyous. We need not stop to stress this difference in outlook on life between the oriental and occidental mind. The former considers the life hereafter as all important, while the latter is concerned most with the development of the present life. The difference is not one of geography but of mental attitude.

Strange to say, religion in the Near East often takes the form of intolerance. We would not infer by this remark that the West is free from this fault, but rather that religious prejudice at present has a far greater influence on all aspects of life in the Near East than it has in the West. Its influence on the political affairs of the Near East is well known. Some of the liberal thinkers in the Near East today are vehemently attacking religious intolerance, and are

seeking to divorce religion from political affairs.

In conclusion, the Arabic people of the Near East have every right to boast of their spiritual heritage, which they have shared with 800,000,000 peoples of different races and languages. They are the offspring of great prophets who have carried the beacon light of truth down through the ages, and have given to the world those eternal spiritual conceptions set forth in the Psalms, Proverbs, the Gospels and the Koran.

§

The second heritage which we shall consider that has come down to us through the Arabic language is the consciousness that we are a people with a glorious intellectual history. The Arabs had scarcely any scientific knowledge before the advent of Islam. They carried with them to conquered territories few seeds of intellectual culture, and in all probability they were rather the adversaries of learning. Their main desire was the aggrandizement of their kingdom and the spread of their religion. It has been related by one of their historians that when they conquered Persia they destroyed all the books found there. Doubtless they did the same in other conquered areas. This feature of their life, however, did not last, for after half a century we see a new intellectual movement in full swing expressing itself in the Arabic language, first at Kufa and Busrah in Mesopotamia, at Damascus in Syria, and at Medina in the Hedjaz.

Later this intellectual movement spread to Baghdad, where it shone in full brilliancy. The movement was first directed toward religious and linguistic ends. This was quite natural, for the Koran was to Moslems and still is the highest embodiment of both religious and linguistic expression. It then led on to deep and broad study of the Arabic language, its etymology and grammar, and of Arabic literature. The literature became notable in character and prodigious in amount. In the scientific and philosophical fields of thought Moslems originally had to fall back upon what they could get from the Greeks, Persians, Indians and Syrians. They translated whatever seemed good into Arabic, took pains to study it thoroughly, and later added greatly to it out of independent discovery and attainment.

The center of this new scientific and philosophical movement was Baghdad. True, the Ummayyids (at Damascus, 662-750 A.D.) had also made progress in these lines, but the real impetus was given by the Abbasids (at Baghdad, 750-1258 A.D.), especially by the Caliph al Ma'mun, the son of Haroun al Rashid, who was himself a scholar and supported learning of every sort generously. With the decline of the Abbasid caliphate a number of states withdrew, such as Persia, Syria, Egypt and Spain, and became independent provinces within the Moslem empire. Even this separation did not weaken the movement. Rather

it broadened it, for instead of the one center at Baghdad, there now came to be many centers scattered all over the Moslem world, each vieing with the others in its support of scholars and its general interest in learning. We might mention here that three of these centers had much to do with the conservation and promotion of learning in Europe during the Middle Ages, namely, Cordova, Seville and Granada, in Spain.

All this intellectual activity was at its height between the ninth century and the Renaissance, when America was unknown and Europe was still in the deep night of ignorance. Von Mosheim says, describing the ninth century in Europe, that the ignorance of the clergy was so great and general that very few of them could read and write. Some of the chief causes for this backward condition were political disturbances, the invasions of the barbarians, and the general ignorance which held even the higher classes of society in its grip. Of the tenth century he says that the Latin nations were groping still in a deep barbarism, and that writers had agreed to call this century "the iron century," because it was void of all learning. The Latin nations have seen no other period so dark and dismal. Of the eleventh century he says that in it the dawn of a new awakening appeared, though it was still restricted to religious centers.

In contrast, these same centuries witnessed the

most glorious period of intellectual activity among the Arabs, east and west. This intellectual glory is a rightful heritage of Arabic-speaking peoples today, not because of their common Semitic origin but because of their language, which has become their common mother. The Arabic language rendered two important services in the life of the Arabs: first, it unified the Islamic empire at the zenith of its power; and second, which is more important, in assimilating previous intellectual cultures it became the repository and trustee of a new culture, called the Arabic. This in time exerted a profound influence on Europe, beginning with the Renaissance and continuing until the dawn of the modern era.

All this may seem exaggerated or boastful, but in order to show the validity of the claim we may leave it to Western writers to testify to its truth. In his introduction to his book on *The Moors in Spain*, Florian says: "They had a glorious era, in which they were known by their diligent search for knowledge and their effort to develop the different arts and sciences; and it will be not far from the truth to say that Europe is indebted to them for their intellectual contribution, which constituted the strongest element in the Renaissance of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries." From Condé in his well-known book, *The History of the Moors in Spain*, we learn that while Europe was in dark ignorance and none of the

people but the higher ranks of the clergy could read, the Arabs had, in East and West, reached a very high state of intellectual development, and that King Don Alphonso the Wise, recognizing this, in the year 1254 ordered the opening of schools in Seville requiring the study of both Arabic and Latin.

Moreover, Cajori has said that the Arabs were the trustees of Greek and Oriental knowledge, and the transmitters of it to Europe. After mentioning their centers of learning, he declares that the world will never cease to be astonished over what the Arabs have done in spherical trigonometry and algebra, and how el Khawarizmi and Abulwafa and Battani and others were not satisfied with what they took from Greek mathematics but went on to compare it with the Indian system, and thus added to both. Something was also done by Jabir, the son of Aflah, and Nasr ed Deen, who separated trigonometry from astronomy and made it an independent science. It is an actual fact that before Arab learning was transmitted to Europe the mathematical knowledge of the Europeans did not excel what the Egyptians knew in the seventh century before Christ. In the twelfth century the Arabs were the teachers of the world. They were the authorities to whom East and West went for both science and philosophy.

From another history of mathematics, that of Ball, we learn that the Arabs had from earliest times im-

portant commercial relations with the Indians. When they established their kingdom between 700 and 730 A.D., they took over the Indian system of arithmetical calculations and decimals. In that year the Arabs carried the Indian mathematical tables from India to Baghdad. Previous to the ninth century they also translated Greek sciences into Arabic, later mixing the Indian and the Greek to produce what is universally known as Arab learning. Undoubtedly the algebra of Khawarizmi is the foundation of the algebra and calculus we study today. History preserves the names of many Arab scientists who greatly contributed to the awakening of Europe.

While we do not deny that the Arabs have taken their sciences mostly from the Greeks, it must be said on the other hand that Greek philosophy found a better atmosphere among the Arabs than among the Christians of the Middle Ages, or, as Ball puts it, "Philosophy and theology could not live at peace in the Christian world of the Middle Ages as they did among Moslem thinkers." What is true of Arabic philosophy is true of medicine, which had reached a comparatively high degree of proficiency among the Arabs long before the Renaissance opened the minds of Europeans to it as a science. Avicenna's Code was the general textbook in European schools in the Middle Ages.

A people having such a language and such an in-

tellectual history cannot but feel proud of what their ancestors have done. This feeling is their heritage. It is one of the foundations on which they are now trying to revive the spirit of nationalism and build up a new national unity. Foreigners who plan to live and work among them cannot afford to overlook this heritage and its present-day influence. They should know that these nations of the Near East, in spite of political and social disunion, and in spite of religious and racial differences, are nevertheless bound together by two great elements in a rich and common heritage, namely, their spiritual Semitic tendencies and the Arabic contribution to our modern intellectual world.

§

Third and finally we shall speak of our social heritage. Doctor Berillon, in the first issue of the *Literary Digest* for 1927, foresees great danger to national life in the mixing of different races. The more intermingling of races the less harmony we can expect in any nation. If we apply this statement to the Near East we find a great deal of truth in it, for much of the trouble of these countries has resulted from the mixture of peoples. It is a known fact that the lands comprising the Near East, especially the Mediterranean shores, have been and still are the meeting place of many nations and races and of the armies of many successive conquerors. They are the

melting pot for the Arab, Phœnician, Greek, Egyptian, Hittite, Palestinian, Persian, Crusader, etc. Two prominent characteristics are noteworthy as coming out of this melting-pot experience, the number of social differences and the loss of a strong patriotic bond.

As to the number of social differences, may we compare for a moment America and Syria. America is a vast country with 120,000,000 people made up of all races and religions; Syria is a small country with about 3,000,000 people, also of many races and religions. The chief difference between the two is this, that the national spirit in America swallows up all racial and religious differences and absorbs them into itself. At least up to the point of assimilation, the resultant blood is enriched. In Syria the weak nationalistic spirit has not been able to absorb these differences and coalesce them into any unified national life. Thus in spite of the fact that the people of Syria speak a common tongue, you find them still retaining their racial differences and disrupted rather than knit together. It is like a revolving body in which the centrifugal forces are stronger than the centripetal.

Some say this lack of unity in the Near East is due to the conflicting policies of the European states now exercising control in these countries. It would be more true to say that the ruling states find these divisive tendencies of long standing and use them for their

own political ends. As a result we witness a lack of the true nationalistic spirit, and this is the weak point in the social life of the Semitic Orient. For wherever you cast your eye you will find differences and tendencies which make it almost impossible for the people to stabilize themselves into a union of the Arabic-speaking countries. This naturally results in lack of ability to get together in any enterprise for the common good.

But the Orient in general is at the dawn of a new awakening. It has begun to see its weaknesses and to try to remedy them. The hope is that the near future will witness a brighter political and social development in all these lands. One of the Western writers has said, "In what could we rightly boast? Is it in our intellectual superiority or in our emotional spirit? No, we cannot boast over the East in these. But we can boast of our social development and our economic system, for these two have given us supremacy in the world." This is true, and the oriental lands have no hope of becoming fully developed in the Western sense until they add to their spiritual and intellectual heritage something of the social and economic development of the West.

ANIS ILYAS KHURI

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II

OUR CHANGING LIFE AND THOUGHT

I WAS born in the Near East and I have lived there almost all my life. I know the peoples of the Near East, their language and customs, and am acquainted with their problems and difficulties. I belong to one of the national groups of the Near East, but I love them all, and I have made it the purpose of my life to work for the good of them all. I believe that all the peoples of the Near East, representing different races and religions, can live together in peace and harmony, and can render a great service to humanity. I want to think and to work for the realization of this supreme purpose, and I see that all Near East peoples have gifts to bring to the great task: the Armenians, although oppressed and persecuted, yet with their diligence and great power for endurance; the Greeks, although perplexed with many problems arising out of their refugee life, yet with their deep sense of beauty and order and a sincere effort for growth; the Bulgarians, although wearied by the long years of war, yet with their inherent vigor and racial freshness; the Turks, although suffering from ignorance and corruption, yet with their devotion to causes and their habit of obedience to order; the Arabs, although

superstitious and backward, yet with their pride of the past and deep feeling of independence; the Persians, with their capacity for art and deep sense of mystical life; and lastly the Kurds, the most backward of all the great races of the Near East, with their robust physique and reserves of energy—all of these have great undeveloped capabilities. The question in the Near East is how to utilize all these energies, now wasted in party and national strife, for great and sublime ends. This is the problem which the Christian missionary enterprise is confronted with in the Near East at the present time.

The most important fact to be remembered regarding the present condition of these people is that they have just begun to awaken out of their long slumber. As the iron of the ploughshare is applied to a hard and undeveloped soil and cuts out deep furrows, upsets the soil from its sleep and exposes it to the bright rays of the sun, and life begins to be seen everywhere, so it is in these lands of the Near East at the present time. There is upheaval and movement everywhere and in all aspects of life. These people have had a great past and have achieved great things in history, but achievement has been followed by a long period of lethargy. When modern civilized nations were still living in a state of savagery and barbarism, in ignorance and darkness, these peoples of the Near East had already lit the torch of civilization and

carried it to many countries. But fortunes have changed. These same people have been kept under oppression and tyranny now for many centuries, and as a result their civilization has been arrested and their growth hindered. The oppressor has been either a foreign nation or some ignorant ruler of their own race. Furthermore, their social customs and traditions have been like iron bands around their bodies, preventing natural growth. Picture the Armenians and Greeks under the Turkish rule of despotism and oppression; think of the Turks under the rule of their sultans, rulers selfish and proud, sensual and dishonest. What could one expect of peoples under such circumstances? The peoples of the Near East are often condemned for backwardness and ignorance, but that is surely harsh judgment, based on insufficient knowledge of circumstances past and present. In reality, if one recalls the conditions to which these peoples have been subjected, one must admire the energy and resourcefulness which they have shown in preserving even their existence.

This, then, is the first fact we ought to remember regarding these countries. They are awakening out of their slumber; they are shaking off the bonds which have tied their hands and feet; they are breaking the iron bars of closed doors. It is very clear that the Near East of the present day is not that of a hundred years ago, nor even that of ten years ago. Everywhere are

new situations with new problems to be solved. The contributory factors in this awakening have been many. The missionaries, by what they do and say, and through the literature they distribute, have contributed much toward bringing in a new day.

But there is another point to be remembered. The time of awakening is, in some respects, the most dangerous part in one's life. The patient under anæsthetic, for example, is calm and quiet; but when he gets rid of its influence and begins to feel fresh strength, when he is awakened out of his slumber and begins to move, that is the time when he needs greatest care. He throws his hands this way and that way, he turns his body this side and that side, and unless he is taken care of by a kind friend he may do himself great harm. This is the condition in which the peoples of the Near East are at the present time. They have been under the poisoning influence of ignorance, intolerance and superstition for many years, and now they are throwing it off and beginning to move. They are looking this side and that side, they are turning this way and that way; and they are in need of the greatest care.

Let us consider the chief movements of life and thought today in the Near East. The first is that of nationalism. Until one hundred years ago all of these peoples were politically under one rule. The Turks under their despotic caliph-sultans ruled from the

Black Sea southward to the Sahara, from the Persian Gulf in the east to Tripoli in the west. It was the rule of an iron hand, which regarded all peoples as slaves. The will of one person, bred in sensuality, imprisoned in the harem of his palace, ruled over all. Nobody could raise any protest against this despotism.

But events within the last hundred years have immeasurably altered this situation. Political conditions in Europe have changed. The new consciousness of Russia as a potential democracy has exerted a strong influence over the masses. The spirit of nationalism has spread rapidly among all peoples. In recent years this spirit has manifested itself here in the Near East. One by one these peoples began to shake off the despotic rule of the Turk and to win back their national freedom—the Serbs, the Rumanians, the Bulgarians, the Egyptians, and lastly the people of Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria. Even the Armenians to some degree, at least, have rid themselves of the rule of despotism and have begun to develop a new national consciousness.

From this let no one conclude that the problem of political independence among these peoples has been solved. Far from it. Rather it has become more acute, so much so that the countries of the Near East today are regarded as a hotbed of intrigue among the Great Powers. The people feel that the present political status is unjust. There must be a readjustment some-

how. The history of the last fifty years shows this clearly. How to harmonize these differences and put an end to old grudges, how to do away with endless dissatisfactions and bring about peace and good will, providing fuller and more nearly equal opportunity for the growth of all peoples, is the acute political problem of the day in the Near East. Some suggest the way of force. In fact the conviction that nothing but war can solve these questions is very general. But is war the best and final solution? In the past, war has increased friction and settled nothing. There must be some better way; the way of conviction and not of force, the way of mutual understanding and not of coercion. This is the spirit which ought to be cultivated among these peoples in order to bring about a more permanent harmony.

But who will cultivate this spirit? The relationship which exists today between most of the Western nations is far from a good example. The Great Powers have their own interests to promote and selfish ambitions to further. The missionary enterprise, as representing the Christian church of the West, is the rightful agency to cultivate the spirit of mutual friendliness and cooperation among these nations. Nationalism may be a good thing if directed by the spirit of unselfishness, but when puffed up with pride and used for selfish ends it becomes exceedingly dangerous. Here, then, is the task of the Christian

agencies in the Near East, not to kill the national spirit but to direct it to noble ends for the common good of humanity.

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The first idea preoccupying the peoples of the Near East is the idea of liberty. Until recent times the social life of the people was based on the tribal system. In the family the father ruled over all, and the younger children obeyed the orders of their eldest brother with full respect. In the schools the teachers ruled with absolute authority. In the church the priest commanded and the people obeyed. Now all this is changing. The spirit of individual freedom has spread to every village and entered every home. After the bondage of past ages how sweet is this sense of personal liberty! Naturally we desire to realize it fully in all departments of life. We have tasted liberty and at once we want to drink all there is to be had. But the meaning of liberty we are far from understanding. There are ever so many definitions of it amongst us. Some think that restrictions of every sort are a hindrance to development and must be done away with. There is a spirit of revolt seen in our civic life, in community activities, in social relationships, in schools and churches and families. The attitude of our youth toward men in authority has altogether changed. The pupils in our schools want to assert their will against that of their teachers. In the

churches the people are making light of the commands of the priest. In the family irreverence is shown to family members and to parental commands.

In some circles this idea of personal liberty leads to luxury and waste and to the surrender of moral restraint. It is reported in Turkish papers that Anatolian merchants visiting Constantinople are spending most of their time in public saloons. The gambling place in the palace of Yildiz is another public sign of this craze for unbridled self-indulgence. A Turkish magazine states that in Constantinople there are today 12,000 public saloons, and that every evening people are spending 110,000 Turkish pounds for drink. In Adana, a city of Asia Minor, people spend daily 6,000 Turkish pounds for *rakki* only. In this way some people take what they conceive to be their personal liberty.

Consider the influence this tendency to license has on family life and on sex relationships. People have begun to think that the bond of marriage is slavery; that both sexes must be free in their relationships. Moral laxity has grown very much among the people. The West has begun to influence the East, but in what terrible ways! The Near East, after the great restraint of the past, is in danger of going to extremes in all matters of social relationships. The women, kept under veil in Moslem harems as slaves of their

husbands, are now in danger of shaking off all authority and disregarding all laws.

The people of the Near East need to understand that personal liberty is always conditioned by the rights of others; that there is a limit to one's own activity and freedom; that if I disregard the rights of other people, others will disregard my rights, and the result will be anarchy. They are in need of understanding also that worthy social customs and sound moral principles are not the result of arbitrary laws put upon us from outside, but must be the expression of our being. They ought to understand that sin is not transgressing the arbitrary command of a despot, but is the denying of our own personalities; it is for this reason that sin always kills and leads to destruction. Who will show these dangers and teach these things to the peoples of the Near East? That is the problem before the missionaries and other Christian agencies in these lands at the present time.

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Another idea preoccupying the people is the idea of democracy. The lands of the Near East have been the great centers of despotic monarchies in the past. Their peoples have been ruled by kings, sultans and caliphs who have exercised absolute dominion. They have had no share in the management of their own affairs and no legal right to make protest. At the present time the whole thought life of the Near East

is reacting against despotism of every sort. The idea of democracy has spread like a contagion, and republics or constitutional governments have been started everywhere. There are parliaments and elections operating in all countries. People have begun to vote. Bulgaria is a constitutional government; Egypt is constitutional; Greece is a democracy, and even Turkey has organized a Turkish republic. The democratic form of government has been adopted as the cure of all political evils, a balsam of national prosperity. Political parties have been organized everywhere. Even the refugee Armenians, who as yet have no land of their own, have political parties.

People want to be democratic. This is good and worthy of all encouragement. But how real a conviction of the masses democracy is no one knows. Most of the desire for it comes from a superficial copying of Western ideas and methods. People are changing their clothing and hats in one day in order to become Westernized. Why should they not adopt Western methods of administration also? England has a constitutional government and she is rich and powerful. Why should we not have constitutional governments and be powerful and rich also? America is a democracy, she has a president, and she is a very rich country. Why should we not have a democracy also and a president and so follow in the pathway of America's prosperity?

Unfortunately this desire to copy the West is largely based on an utter misunderstanding of European civilization, and herein is our danger. Our people ought to know that democracy is a form of life rather than a form of government; that democracy is based on perfect regard of the rights of the minorities; that democracy does not apply harsh means and brute force to safeguard its existence; that democracy is based on good-will and cooperation among all parties. There is much for us to think of in the words of Aristotle, who says: "Equity remembers benefits received rather than injuries that have been suffered, and benefits received rather than benefits conferred; it is patient under injustice; it is readier to appeal to reason than to force, to arbitration than to the law."

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Perhaps the most striking change in the Near East today is to be seen in the great desire of our people for education and good literature. Until recent years most of the inhabitants were illiterate. A person who could write and read was regarded as a magician with supernatural powers. Besides, educated people usually confined their education to the study of the Bible and the grammar of the Bible in Christian circles, or to the study of the Koran and the Arabic language in Moslem circles. Now all this has been changed. There are many everywhere who can read and write.

Most of the young people have a fairly good education in science and languages. Even the women can read and write in many homes today. It is very interesting to see an ordinary cab driver reading a newspaper while waiting for a job, or a workman reading in the tram-car. Books and papers have gone to most insignificant corners of the Near East, and entire villages have already begun to read. Everywhere there is a demand for schools and a desire for knowledge. Everybody wants to read, and all parents wish to educate their children. I believe the most hopeful thing in the development of the peoples of the Near East is this earnest desire for education. It has always been one of the big factors in human progress.

But if there is no good and wholesome literature, ability to read may be a curse rather than a blessing. The danger in the Near East is that most of the literature for the people is produced for commercial purposes. The publishers want to sell and to heap up profits. Their purpose is not to produce something which will uplift the people, but rather to publish whatever will appeal to the ephemeral tastes of the people. If one takes the literature published in a day or a week in one of the big towns of the Near East and reads it through, he will find little that is important and vital. In some places there is much litera-

ture which is merely erotic, appealing to the baser sentiments and desires.

Similarly, education, when misunderstood or misdirected, presents its perils. We are in danger of being misled by a superficial knowledge of the education of the West. We take education as the almighty savior of our own social and national life. We believe that if we are well informed in the sciences and arts we shall be building our life on strong foundations. In regarding education as the acquisition of learning and as a means to power we neglect to recognize that character and the moral good of others are its real ends. There are comparatively few leaders in the Near East to guide the thought of the people along these lines.

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In addition to the problems of liberty, democracy and education there is the village problem. In lands of the Near East there are still comparatively few industrial problems which are similar to those in Western countries. We have a few factories, but most of these have been erected during recent years. Our countries are mainly agricultural, and the majority of our people live in small villages. The life of a villager in these lands is very simple. Often he works in spring and summer and is idle in winter. The land usually is owned by some rich land-owner who lives in the town, and for whom the villagers work for a

very small wage, just enough to give them food and shelter. The social and sanitary conditions in these villages are very unsatisfactory. Children are born and die without the care of a nurse or a doctor. No hospitals or even dispensaries for simple medical treatments are to be found. The villager in Egypt is born, lives and dies in a mud hut. He works in the field during the day, and in the evening he enters his hut, curls his legs under his shirt, and sleeps in one corner of the home with his family. The life of villagers in Turkey is not much different.

In the whole Near East the rural problem is of greatest importance for the future development of these countries. The villagers are ignorant and uninformed with respect to new methods in agriculture. How to improve the condition of the villagers, their social and economic life, is a most vital problem. The landlords are not very desirous of seeing village life improved. They prefer to keep the villagers in ignorance and superstition. When the landlord visits the village, he wants to see the villagers come and kiss his skirt and offer due homage. But conditions are changing and the villagers are also coming to a new sense of their rights. This is why Bolshevik propaganda is welcomed in many parts of the Near East.

There are two important problems related to village life. First, there is the problem of the improve-

ment of agricultural implements and the introduction of more scientific methods in farming. Given both of these the production of the land in many places will be increased two- or threefold. This will greatly improve the economic condition of the country as a whole. Second, there is the problem of improving the social and moral life of the villagers: how to educate the villager so that he may willingly get rid of the bondage of old traditions and superstitions, and be enlightened and come to a new realization of life and its purpose. So far, foreign missionary activities have been centered mostly in large towns and have served chiefly the town people. Today there is a great need and a real call for the village type of missionary service, to bring about a new and better day in village life.

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In conclusion, I want to emphasize again the great awakening in these lands of the Near East. For centuries our people have been resigned to their unhappy condition; now they are restless and dissatisfied. There is an intense desire for betterment everywhere. Under these conditions, is there any call for the Christian missionary? What should be the attitude of the Christian churches of the West toward the need of Near East peoples?

Certainly the influences coming from the West are not all healthy. The European merchant says to

us, "Leave your native goods; they are coarse; buy my beautiful and shiny goods, and you will be Westernized." The European brewer says, "Buy my expensive drinks, use them at your tables, and you will be civilized." The European militarist says, "Equip your armies with our expensive arms, buy aeroplanes and great costly battleships, and you will be strong." The European politician says, "Intrigue with one another, make secret treaties, and wait for the best opportunity to attack your enemy." The European scholar says, "Acquire our knowledge, sciences and arts, and use them for your own interests, and you will grow wealthy and be cultured." And the Bolshevik says, "Cast away social and moral principles, shake them off from your shoulders, revolt against all authority, and you will become independent and great."

Now has the Christian West anything to say to us, confused as we are by all these beguiling invitations? The women in their poverty are putting aside our native cloth and spending money on fancy goods imported from Europe. The drink evil is becoming an enormous problem in our countries. The appetite is rapidly growing for intoxicating drinks and liquor. The militarist propaganda is appealing to many of our people. They believe that the ultimate solution of all political problems must be through force and armies, so, although in an impoverished state, they are

heedlessly spending millions for ammunitions, aeroplanes, and arms. Where all this will lead, nobody can tell. Should the Christians in Europe and America keep silent under these conditions? If the European commercial houses send their agents to advertise their fancy goods, if the European governments send their ambassadors to further their political interests, should not the Christians of Europe and America send their finest men and women to point out to us different and better ways? Has the teaching of Jesus and his way of life no bearing on these problems with which our countries are struggling? Is the West dominated altogether by material interests? Can we not have a message of higher motives and a hand of sincere good will and friendship from young Christians in the West who believe in Jesus and his way and really carry our best interests on their hearts? In international relationships is there not a place for service motivated by the spirit of Jesus Christ and rendered in his name? The churches of the West have an opportunity greater than ever before for disinterested service throughout the Near East, if they will only realize it.

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III

THE STATUS OF ISLAM

ISLAM has been asleep a long time, and we might have been justified in thinking that it would never awake. It has faltered and lagged behind in the march of progress, and all because it has stuck to its old traditions and learning, its unchanging customs and beliefs.

To describe the true condition and state of Islam in the Near East today one would need to make very careful investigations, and bring together knowledge that would fill volumes were an attempt ever made to record it all. On the other hand to give a picture of Islam within the limits of a single chapter, one can only point out a few of the truths which he himself has experienced, and of the observations he has made of family life and of what Moslems actually think and do.

I was born a Moslem, of Moslem parents, and was brought up in Al Azhar, the greatest Moslem university of the Near East. Following this, I taught Moslem students for eighteen years, coming into contact with their parents, rich and poor. Now I preach to Moslems, and enjoy the privilege of meet-

ing hundreds of their renowned professors as well as of the ignorant classes. In this way I get to know what they know and believe. In fact, I can clearly see the picture of their inner life, and so I trust I am able rightly to depict the present status of Islam and the thoughts of its believers.

I shall divide this subject into three parts, discussing Islam in turn from the educational, the social, and the religious standpoints.

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First, then, Islam and education. The Moslems have maintained their conservative attitude toward education for a very long time. They have been satisfied with the ability to read the Arabic language and to commit to memory the sacred Koran and other religious writings. Very few of the teachers have attempted to go beyond the study of the fundamental principles of their religion. The curriculum has of course included language with grammar and syntax. The number of more advanced teachers does not exceed two per cent, even in highly civilized Moslem countries such as Egypt. In other countries one can seldom find enough of them to count on the fingers of his hands. For example, in Hedjaz and Nejd only one school is in existence in which some of the useful and fundamental subjects apart from Arabic and the Koran are taught.

The following conversation took place recently be-

tween the editor of *Es-Siyassa* and an Egyptian doctor who had been traveling with the crown prince of Hedjaz and who remained in Hedjaz for six months and now has come back to tell us about education in that part of the world:

"Could you tell me something about education in Hedjaz, Doctor?"

"Yes, there has lately been established a new institution in Mecca which is to teach religious subjects and mathematics. And in every large village throughout Hedjaz there is a primary school. But in Nejd the schools do not teach anything but the Koran and the traditions."

"And do the people in Hedjaz like the modern teaching and enlightenment?"

"Yes, and especially the king, Ibn Saoud, and his sons. He likes every step taken for the betterment of conditions, but he is obliged to consider the old sheikhs of religion, whom he esteems very highly and so dares not cross because of the influence they have over the people. Whenever he plans to make some change for the better, he first does his best to win these sheikhs to his side, then he goes ahead and does it."

In Palestine Moslem students have never received any modern teaching except from the mission schools. The education given by the pre-war government was inferior to that of these mission institutions. This con-

tinued to the end of the Great War, when the British government established ninety-eight primary schools for boys and twenty-three for girls, and four secondary schools in Jerusalem, Nablus, Nazareth and Acre. They also established a normal training school for women in which at present forty-six girls are studying, seventeen of whom are Moslems and the rest Christians.

Since Egypt is the strongest and most advanced of Moslem countries, due largely to the Mosque Al Azhar, to which Moslems come from all over the world, and since the advance movement in Islam is more in evidence in Egypt than elsewhere (excepting Turkey), and since I myself am an Egyptian, I shall write particularly on the religious condition of Egypt.

When the Christian missionaries first entered our country the true light of education started to shine upon us. But we refused in the beginning to go to any Christian school for fear of having our religious beliefs changed. So for some time only Christian Egyptians profited from the teaching, with the result that they were able to hold almost all the government offices until the Moslems began to have more confidence in these mission schools, and sent their boys and girls to them in large numbers. Now they often prefer these Christian schools even to government schools, for they have found out that these schools care more for moral and spiritual instruction, espe-

cially the schools for girls. Thus until popular education was introduced by the government these mission schools were like Christian minarets to our country.

I quote from one who wrote on this theme in a book entitled *The Present State of the Egyptians:*

"We can say that the inferior status of education in our schools is due to the traditional beliefs and practices to which our people cling. . . . We know that the Christian sects in the East have not followed our example, and they have succeeded in getting the best out of their education, while we have continued heedless of this great fault of ours, nor have we stirred ourselves to establish schools which would give us the opportunities of foreign schools."

Speaking of the education of girls, this same author said:

"Strange to say, ten or twelve years ago education for girls did not exist in Egypt. This shows that we were ignorant of the benefits that lie behind women's education, and were afraid that the girls if educated might bring havoc to their families or might use their knowledge to mix in the society of men, or to write letters which might bring disgrace on the family."

This continued until the government took it upon itself to establish a school for girls. But the majority of the people still hated the thought of it and avoided this school as a healthy man would avoid a plague.

This resulted in the education in Christian schools of girl foundlings who, after getting a start with a knowledge of reading and writing, would go on to study advanced subjects such as medicine and midwifery. Yet we disliked to have our daughters taught, and protested against the movement, saying that there were no teachers fit or able to undertake their education. We did this even though we knew that there were many able and clever women in Syria, our neighboring country. Why should we not have called some of them to do the teaching if we were in need of it?

This was Egypt's condition in the last quarter century. Fortunately it did not continue indefinitely. The people were driven by certain influences to establish schools both for boys and for girls. It is appropriate to mention here the greatest leaders in this movement for the advancement of women, among them the late Kasim Bey Amin, author of the two books, *The Modern Women* and *The Freedom of Women*, and Madame Malakeh Nasef. Both these leaders strove like heroines to abolish the old traditions which stood in the way of the advancement of women. Formerly we had no schools directed by natives except the religious schools connected with our mosques. The government had only about twenty primary schools, three secondary schools, and five high schools. Now primary schools in our cities are

numbered in the hundreds. In addition, the small schools in villages and on farms have been improved, though there are still many native schools which have no regulated system and exist only for financial profit. The number of secondary schools, private and government, has increased to sixty-eight. Moreover, the government has established twelve schools of professional learning where subjects such as medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, law, arts, archæology, commerce and agriculture are taught.

The schools for girls have also increased. Today the number of Moslem school girls in Egypt is about 18,000, while the number of Moslem boys in school is 370,000. Selected students have been sent to Europe to study, and a graded system of education has been adopted for the country. Even in religious institutions the curriculum has been changed and other than religious courses have been introduced.

In spite of all this, one finds in the yearly governmental report that ignorance in Egypt is still the rule, and that great effort on the part of educated men is still needed to do away with it. In all Egypt only ten per cent of the men and one-half of one per cent of the women can read and write. If we were to distinguish between religious sects, we find that there are 5.3 per cent educated Moslems, 12.4 per cent educated Christians, and 43.8 per cent educated Jews. It is most probable that obligatory education

will begin very soon in all Egypt. The educational system will be greatly extended, and the secondary and high school curricula will be strengthened. The fact that students are being sent out every year to America and Europe to specialize in different subjects so as to help in this educational advance after their return, encourages us to hope for rapid improvement.

Much of our own literature is out of date and no longer of great value. For example, our books on philosophy, morality and social science do not support or deal with present beliefs or practices. Our historical books are full of mythological stories which have no basis in fact. They are unscientific in form and substance. In many respects our books are far behind the thought and need of our age. The people, therefore, have good reason to turn aside and look elsewhere for what will be more beneficial to them. In doing so they choose the books of the West. Even some of our magazines and newspapers, of which we have a great many, may be said to have little value, since they do not deal with scientific, social or political facts and opinions, but seek merely to give whatever will bring in the largest income for their owners. They exert an unwholesome influence in the country, and spread the spirit of bigotry. The weekly papers are mostly comic, and aim only to get as much as they can financially; meanwhile they too have a bad influence on many.

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Second, I shall consider Islam and social life. There is no doubt that the social life of Islam nowadays is much more advanced than it was a few years ago. Reforms are going on constantly and are spreading. The imitation of the practices of Western countries and the assimilation of their customs and ways of living have, in part, led to these reforms.

The first point to be noted in the social life of Islam is that family life is gradually becoming better. Formerly in some respects it was almost inhuman. We trust that the ideal of a peaceful home will spread throughout Egypt. If so, it will be due to the education of girls, to recent reforms affecting divorce, the choice of a husband, the age at which a girl may marry, and the education of both husband and wife in the responsibilities of marriage and home-making.

One could in former times seldom find a peaceful Moslem home, because the women were not trained in home responsibilities and were unable and unfit to nurse and train their children. What pain this brought to the poor husbands and fathers! When through defective care a child died, what could the father do but blame the mother, thus bringing hate and strife into the family life? Divorce often added to the misery of a family, or hatred and maladjustment arose

when a girl was forced to marry some person she did not love or respect or to whom she was married at an immature age.

But there has been an awakening in Egypt. Speakers and writers have proclaimed the necessity of agitation until legal measures have been taken and laws remedying these defects have been enacted; for example, making divorce next to impossible, fixing the age of marriage, and discouraging polygamy.

The following is part of an article written on "Marriage and Divorce," which appeared recently in an Egyptian newspaper:

"In this article I am going to speak about divorce. It is this dreadful act and this offensive word which leads to the destruction of the home, in that it weakens the life of the family and makes the children orphans without the death of their parents. Many a time it has been the cause of ruining the future life of innocent children who, if they had had a mother's affection and protection, would have grown up to be stars shining in the heaven of great men. I do not mean to say that divorce should be forbidden in our religion, but I do say that it should not be resorted to because of a few spoken words, sometimes of trifling importance. Divorce should not be an instrument for destruction but for construction.

"Women make many mistakes for which they are

punished accordingly. For some things they are scolded, for others they are made to live in poverty, and for some they are forsaken. This last is the hardest on women. They should be divorced therefore only for things very serious. I give the following examples of adequate causes for divorce:

"1. If enmity has taken hold of both husband and wife because they have come to hate each other; 2. If the wife is not able to maintain the standard of family life; 3. If she treats her husband scornfully, in spite of the fact that he has warned her at least three times; 4. If she has been the cause of any wrong to her country in which she is proved to be a traitress; 5. If she has been unfaithful and has committed herself to another man.

"In cases like these, there is good ground for divorce, without putting any blame on the man.

"But what we observe nowadays is very different. If the wife quarrels with her mother-in-law, who frequently intends harm towards her, or if she pays a visit to a friend of hers without the permission of her husband, she must suffer divorce as her punishment.

"These and other trifling causes which religion never contemplated have greatly extended this privilege of divorce. That is why the Prophet (the blessing of God be upon him) said that while divorce is thought justified by the people, it is hated by God.

Divorce should not be consummated until the case has passed through court, where the matter can be thoroughly discussed and an honest judgment given, either in favor of the man or the woman. Moreover, this is not contrary to religion, and for this I have strong proof.

"So with this I appeal to the House of Commons and the Parliament and to the Government, and I challenge our learned men to help in the making of a better and more peaceful home life and ask God to lead us to do what he thinks right and that which promises peace and happiness."

One thing that indicates how family life among Moslems is improving is that wives accompany their husbands on calls or visits, walking openly with them in the streets. This in the past was considered humiliating and disgraceful, but today this is changed. Husbands even take their wives to public places where performances are enacted, to receptions and other social and educational events.

Nowadays women even go alone to such places, and if perchance you happen to go to the markets you will find great numbers of them, with or without their husbands, purchasing what they need or even attending sales. Formerly such actions would have led to divorce. It is also true that many husbands are now inclined to spend their time at home, while

formerly they spent most of it in coffee houses and saloons because they could not endure the conditions of their home life.

In short, movements for the improvement of the home and the status of women are playing their biggest part at the present time. Many societies have been formed to teach women how to debate and discuss matters dealing with customs, scientific discoveries and household duties. Women in Egypt have begun to regard with pride the place they hold in society. They have asked for a part in many governmental affairs, demanding the reform of many old-fashioned practices, and they constantly exhort one another to forsake tradition and all unacceptable customs. The whole movement for the elevation of women and the improvement of the home has been a great success and already many evil customs have been abolished. This is noticeable in customs connected with mourning or weddings, or with belief in magic and astrology, or in ceremonies on which great sums of money used to be spent.

In spite of all this there are some who are unsatisfied with the new position which woman has attained, saying that she is still unchanged in spirit and character, and still far behind men in civilization. They say that she is changed only in outward things. For this reason many men have determined not to marry, and the following article written by a

woman (Khadeeja Deeb) will show some of the reasons given:

"In certain countries of Europe the woman is not allowed to marry until she has obtained some knowledge of certain fundamental things necessary for home life and the bringing up of children. If we look at this training and its results, we find that such a bride should be able to manage not one home but many, and so should have nothing to hinder her from fulfilling her duties.

"The bride leaves her old house where she was brought up and comes to a new and unfamiliar one. There she finds herself in a difficult and strange position as manager of the affairs of the house—an experience totally new to her—in short, she finds that she has many duties to perform and many new experiences to undergo. If she is not capable she gets into difficulty, begins to feel miserable; all her dreams of married happiness vanish and she feels fatigued and helpless in the face of the new problems of married life.

"That is usually the case in Egypt. A bride enters the bridegroom's house, and, showing her inability to manage, causes her husband to regret the step he has taken. Sometimes the man has to provide the many things which his bride dreamed of, or perhaps had at her father's house, such as servants and other

expensive things, or make possible constant attendance at theatres and balls, thus giving him no opportunity to conserve his resources. Very often after hard labor a husband is able to meet most of these demands and does so for the sake of peace, at least at the beginning. But other times it is financially impossible for him to do so. So he has to take all the blame and all the nagging and criticism until he feels discouraged with home and wife and life itself. These are some of the maladjustments to which we are committed, which make us think a good deal about remaining unmarried.

"Nor is the blame to be put on the bride alone but on her parents, who in turn lacked the knowledge of correct child training. It is a universal custom in Egypt that the mother cares for every hair of her daughter's head and would not even have the wind blow a single strand. She refuses to allow her daughter to participate in any work at home, but prefers to have her sit idly by as a stately queen. She thinks that it is humiliating to have her daughter do housework. But of course she is absolutely wrong and foolish to think so. Had the mother trained her daughter to take some share in these things, and had she made her help her in the management of the home, the bride would have succeeded beautifully in her married life.

"Mothers should teach their daughters to be

servants at home; to respect their husbands and be humble; to cooperate with their servants; they should teach them religion, chastity and generosity; also economy, economy, always economy. If this is done, it will assure a happy and pleasant home life for our daughters."

Whatever is said about the advance of the Moslem woman, Moslem husbands grieve over the false standards of their wives and the lack of mutual sympathy in thought and education between them. There are still those who cling to old superstitions and beliefs and do not like to have women go about with uncovered faces or to participate with men in any of their activities. Here is one article among many written by one of the learned men of Al Azhar:

"I am certain that God made the veil compulsory for the women of believers, when I realize what the consequences of unveiling are, and what curses it brings on all people. This is clearly shown to every observer.

"Women go unveiled in France, Germany and Italy. They go out alone and participate with the men in their social life in England and other European countries and in America. Observe the conditions in these countries. Where is morality? Where is dignity and modesty? How numerous are the painful love

stories and how great the calamity of prostitution, adultery and vice! And what is prostitution, that disease fatal to both male and female, but the outcome of unveiling, which many deceivers claim to be a better custom than that sanctioned by our prophets?

"To unveil is to stray from the religion of God Almighty. It is a great setback to the nation. It is nothing but foolishness and weakness. It is a great catastrophe, contrary to the book of God and the regulations of his prophet. Moreover, many today proclaim that woman should leave her harem and participate with men in their activities. They encourage women to mingle with many people in clubs and meetings. For all this there is no excuse except that of blind imitation of the West. The worst of it is that those who are proclaiming this new practice are among the prominent men of our nation.

"Who is the woman you are trying to civilize and whom you encourage to participate in every phase of life? Women in Egypt are the weakest-minded of all on earth and the slowest to understand. They are still innocent of life and know nothing of either religion or education. To demand that they be unveiled is a crime and an unpardonable sin in the eyes of God.

"So have mercy on our country. Do not cause her to fall into destruction and do not lead her into evil."

The opinions just expressed concern chiefly those women living in cities and towns. Other women in villages and on farms are still old-fashioned in life and thought. They come into little if any contact with European women. They have nothing much of education and less to suggest change in their environment. Yet in spite of all this or because of it they have stronger characters and purer hearts than those who have Europeanized themselves by superficially imitating Westerners in outward appearance, losing thereby their natural reserve and dignity and lowering themselves perceptibly in the eyes of their Egyptian sisters. Newspapers are full of articles condemning the practice of "hanging to the tail of Western civilization." The following comment on "The Demoralization of Character" is written by one of the better educated Egyptian ladies:

"It is not the wearing of a hat or the practice of going unveiled that degenerates a woman's character and dignity. Nor do these practices in themselves uplift her. What we fear and what we flee from is her adoption of customs which call attention to herself, of the habit of painting her face and of wearing such absurd clothes that persons of a sound and pure character cannot but revolt against it."

The care and training of children is a point to be noted as affecting family life. One regrets when

writing about the bringing up of children in our country that his words are usually addressed to mothers who are often illiterate, who know nothing of character building or of the care of children. They lack the capacity to lead in imparting truth, self-control and morality to others. How often they make promises to their children without ever fulfilling them! How frequently they threaten them with severe punishments which are never administered! How often children hear their parents lie, curse and use vile language! How seldom the parents chide them for their lying and quarrelling! How often, too, they frighten their children with stories of evil spirits, so that the children grow up to be weak, ignorant, cowardly and even criminal! I hope that what is being done today in training mothers in the care of their homes and children will save many little ones from this fate.

Further, the care of many mothers for the health of their children is still governed by unwise rules and unsanitary regulations. If we consider the number of deaths in our country each year, we find that the majority of those who have died are children. The percentage in infant mortality is much higher than in any other country, and most of the diseases among poor children are the result of filth. About ninety per cent of the eye diseases are said to result from dirt, because parents fear the evil eye if they keep their

children clean and attractive looking. So if you happen to visit those districts where these people live, you will marvel at the sight of these children playing in the dust and sprinkling it on each other with no one to hinder them from doing so. Among the favorite ways of treating a sick person is to make him visit some old tomb, or have a sheikh read a part of the Koran over his head, or hang upon him charms which will keep away evil spirits, or use some medicine which will do more harm than good. We can say now that these troubles are decreasing, due to the many hospitals which have been established by the European colonies and missionaries in this part of the world. Even the government has added to the number of these hospitals, especially hospitals for eye diseases, which are very common and spreading in our country.

It is a promising sign to observe many who previously never believed in doctors or in medical treatment now crowding the hospitals and sending in numerous medical calls. I visited the British missionary hospital at Cairo very recently and found that the number of treatments there is about three hundred daily. We have great hope that the native government will make it its duty to establish hospitals and medical schools to teach scientific methods of sanitation and health, both to adults and little children. Conditions in the houses of poor people are really

pitiful, especially among those who live in villages where filth is constantly surrounding them. The condition of children of rich parents, particularly of the Egyptian female child, is described in the following article by Fikry Bey Abaza, advocate and writer for one of our well-known papers:

"The Egyptian in her childhood suffers. Her mother's love heaps upon her weak body clothes of all kinds, wool and linen, besides the many bandages and amulets, belts and rings which not even the strongest prize-fighters could bear. This is a deadly imprisonment for such a delicate body, and if for one reason or another some of these clothes were removed one day and the wind should touch this tender body, which has never been accustomed to wind before, it would throw the child into serious diseases, which would keep hold of her in her future life and cause her to be a permanent invalid.

"Moreover, in her babyhood she is taken care of by ignorant servants who know no difference between milk and pickles, between peas and bitter beans. Whatever comes in the servant's way is a good meal for the child.

"Then the child is kissed about ten thousand times a day, on her mouth and cheeks, by men, women and servants. And God only knows what these mouths leave on the face or mouth of the baby.

"Then when her teeth grow—oh, what the poor child has to suffer through her mother's tender care, for then is the time to eat and eat and eat so as to swell and swell and become fat. Not only this, but the mother will stuff into the baby's stomach, morning, noon and night, food of every kind. She forces all this into that stomach, taking different measures of torture to succeed in her operation. As a result, the little stomach swells and the intestines weaken and the heart is affected and general weakness ensues."

There is also the matter of the public moral life. Even though educational conditions have improved, as has been said before, little has been done along the lines of morals and manners. It is said that the Moslems are deteriorating more and more, and the forces of evil are daily destroying the forces of goodness and righteousness. Falsehood and deceit are increasing, and indecision and selfishness are taking hold on the masses. Were you to talk on self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of others, your words would find no entrance into the hearts of people. Hundreds are writing against malice and are being crowned for their virtue, but they themselves are the first to deny in practice what they have preached. Therefore many societies have been formed in Egypt to prevent moral deterioration, and many a zealous man is striving for this cause. Lately the government

has prescribed or enacted many laws which are directed against those who set aside morality and pursue vice and iniquity. Here is an article written to the governor of Cairo informing him of the alarming use of drugs and asking him to request the government to put an end to it:

"The use of drugs is leading Egypt to destruction and to such a condition as has never been known in all the history of the world. This is because there are no regulations forbidding the sale of these drugs, with the exception of a very few. But now laws must be enacted, and we hope that they will be, before any more time is lost. At the same time, public opinion must be aroused in favor of these laws, and people must be taught that great danger threatens both the economic and physical welfare of the nation. What is most to be regretted is that many students in our primary and secondary schools have been led to play with cocaine. There are many girls who go around gathering the remains of cigars, and who play with heroin. The effendis on the trains and the peasants on their farms and the civilized in their cities are all equally an easy prey to this vice."

A matter of great importance just now is the organization of societies which imitate similar bodies in America in their demand of the government that

laws be enacted prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors. Another noticeable thing is the development of a society called the Society of Honor, started about five years ago, to fight prostitution and adultery. The members of this society go out every evening to all the houses of prostitution, to exhort young men and to distribute books and pamphlets telling of the dangers in the way of such practices. Most of the members of this society have been educated in mission schools or have been led into this welfare service by mission students.

The government has almost done away with gambling places and with the use of hashish. On the whole there is a strong effort to oppose vice and to shun all foreign districts which are the sources of this depravity.

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Finally, there is the consideration of religious life itself. It is impossible to advance in education and in social life while religious attitudes remain static and the religious life stagnant. The number of people going to Christian religious meetings this year is far greater than in former years. Every Sunday morning you will find evangelical churches, whether in town or in country districts, crowded with Moslem attendants. These multitudes who come ask many questions about Christian morality, whereas they used to ask

abstract metaphysical questions about the way in which a man can conceive of the divinity of Jesus, his incarnation and his death—beliefs which their religion denies.

It has also become easy to preach to Moslems, and a preacher can speak about Christ's salvation in the midst of the most fanatical Moslem districts today without being opposed. I myself have visited most of the mosques, have spoken about Jesus in many of them, and have distributed pamphlets and gospels to those who have asked for them. Even to the Mosque of Azhar, where I was brought up and where many of its teachers know me, I have often gone, alone or with others, and many a time we have spoken and prayed with the students there.

Many Moslems have come to enjoy reading the Bible, and reports from Bible agencies tell us that the number of Moslems who buy the Bible has increased greatly. What is more promising is the stimulation of the native evangelical Christians to do the work of foreign missionaries and their native helpers in preaching to the Moslems. In every church in Egypt a committee is formed to work among the Moslems, and great interest is shown.

Last year I was invited to forty different churches to preach to Moslems who had come with gladness to listen to what I had to say. I was also invited to Palestine, where I preached about twenty times in

Jerusalem, especially to Moslems. Many would stay after the meeting to discuss further the points which I had stressed. Many Christians in Syria have turned their attention to preaching to Moslems. Two years ago a meeting was held in Beirut for all Protestant evangelical pastors in Syria, for the purpose of strengthening their endeavor and better preparing them to do their utmost to win Syrian Moslems.

We have circles also for studying the Bible, in which Moslems who are anxious and zealous to get more knowledge of the Christian truth have enrolled. Yearly many of these Moslems ask to be baptized. The Y.M.C.A. numbers hundreds of Moslems among its members, and they gladly come to the religious meetings and listen to religious addresses.

Thus far we have discussed the religious situation from the positive viewpoint. Observing the situation from the negative viewpoint we find that Moslems are in great uproar against their own religion, against their beliefs, against the dormant state of their society, against the old fanatical spirit, against old customs, against the old forms of worship.

The Turkish government has opposed the Islamic religion and its teachers, and this fact has become known throughout the world. The Hedjaz government has fought many of the superstitious beliefs planted in the hearts and minds of Moslem believers, and a number of teachers and learned men today have

written many books tracing these errors to the Koran and to the Hadith. Such works have revealed the fact that many a soul has been waiting for these corrections, although the old fanatics and bigoted sheikhs have bitterly opposed them. Of those educated and disciplined in modern schools, most have accepted the conclusions of these reformers. This religious revolt is becoming stronger every day. He who reads newspapers and magazines finds numbers of articles written by Moslems, both men and women, criticizing Islam. These include criticisms on divorce, which the Koran brought into existence, criticisms on polygamy, and on many other beliefs and practices founded by Islam.

I wrote recently an article, printed in a church newspaper in Egypt, in which I collected many sayings of Moslems, and with two paragraphs from this article I close this chapter:

"Islam nowadays is in a condition which was never dreamed of formerly, and in almost every city in Egypt there is a native group enlightening the minds of their fellow-men and exhorting them to leave the past. Who ever expected to see what Turkey has done?—she who was thought to be the foundation stone in Islam. Or who ever dreamed that the Moslems in Egypt, Syria and Hedjaz would rise with one mind to fight old beliefs and customs long considered to be holy? Can it be that one of the learned Moslem

men should himself publish a book dealing with the false and evil phases in his religion? Who ever expected that progress in ideals would one day demand a change in marriage regulations and divorce customs? Yet all these have come to pass."

KAMIL EFFENDI MANSOUR

Cairo, Egypt

IV

THE ORIENTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH

IT is a pleasure to be given the opportunity to outline in this chapter the present condition of affairs in the ancient Christian churches throughout the East. I have long been awaiting such an opportunity of expressing in simple and unequivocal terms what the rising generation in religious communities in this part of the world think of their respective churches, and what they feel regarding the need for reform.

It may be well at the outset to state that the writer makes no pretensions to an exhaustive treatment of the subject. I have never gone deeply into the history of the oriental churches, and I have not made any comprehensive study of the creeds of the different Christian sects. I deal in this chapter, therefore, chiefly with the influence these old churches exercise on the minds of their adherents, and with the reaction which that influence provokes in the daily life of the people, as well as with the longing which the modern social movements have created in the minds of the thinking classes in these churches for a more rational and more practical system of worship to supersede the obsolete system of rites and practices.

It is a well-known fact that the Christian church in its primitive state was far simpler in its creed and ritual than it is now. This simplicity of its beliefs and ecclesiastical practices won for it many adherents from the people who came under its influence. It was naturally very difficult for the new proselytes to give up entirely all the practices that had prevailed in their former systems of worship. Hence compromises were resorted to by the fathers of the early church, who accepted and adapted many of the old rites familiar to the new converts and made them a part of the Christian ritual. A new significance more or less consistent with the precepts and fundamental truths of Christianity was thus given to many heathen superstitions and practices in worship. Later on, ecclesiastical paraphernalia was increased by the church authorities for various reasons. These added weight to forms of worship already heavy with symbolism. So bulky has formalism in worship become in most of the ancient oriental churches during the last few centuries that the real meaning of worship and of true practical religion has gradually been lost sight of. The high walls of outward show and symbolical rites have, as it were, shut out the view of the simple, vital and dynamic elements of the Christian faith.

No doubt the majority of the early fathers of the Greek Orthodox Church, the members of the famous seven Church Councils, as well as later spiritual

authorities, sincerely thought they would help the believers in their devotional life by giving the abstract truths in which the Christian religion abounds concrete illustrations or symbols. On the other hand, it is not difficult to recognize in many of the church officials potentates who were very jealous of their ecclesiastical authority, and who therefore sought to keep up their personal influence and absolute sway over the masses, not by exemplary conduct and self-abnegation so much as by increasing the number and variety of outward practices in worship, thus bringing both clergy and laity into closer daily dependence upon them. They knew that it was possible to confuse the laymen by too much ritual and too many rules and practices, thus making the control of the clergy more absolute and leaving them sole and supreme judges of what should or should not be done.

The majority of adherents of the Eastern churches today are so ignorant that they do not know even the essentials of their own or any other religious faith. They have a very hazy conception of the broad fundamental principles of Christianity, and practically no knowledge at all of the important differences in beliefs between themselves and the adherents of other sects. When the average worshiper enters the church on Sunday and automatically moves his right hand to describe the sign of the cross, and repeats the same act during the progress of the service a score of times,

and when his sight is caught by the many crosses that decorate almost every object in the great edifice, he sees in them only so many symbols of the cruel instrument of torture on which his beloved Christ suffered death. When the average worshiper goes through the different religious rites and practices, or witnesses the clergy officiating at the altar, he can hardly tell what all this ritualism means; after ages of ignorant theatrical worship he has lost sight of the original concepts behind all symbolism in religion. To him religious worship and indeed religion itself are merely so much empty form, and he is quite content that it should be so. Why should he bother about rules of conduct and higher principles of life and social intercourse, so long as he can at any time satisfy his conscience and become reconciled to his God by attending a mass and leave the service no different than when he entered?

The ignorance of the people, however, would not have prevented a spiritual revival within the ancient church had its clergy undertaken the task of enlightening the laity in real earnest. As a matter of fact they have always abstained from this supreme duty for two reasons, their own ignorance and selfishness. The bulk of the clergy are themselves as ignorant as the laymen. No one would expect them to instruct the flock in subjects of creed or practical religion. Those of the clergy who are better off, who have studied

theology, comparative religion, the history of Christianity and church organization, and who therefore have some understanding of the basic elements underlying the great truths of life, are often too absorbed in their own personal affairs or worldly concerns or political intrigues to find sufficient time for the intellectual and spiritual edification of believers. Some are too jealous of authority, and too well satisfied with their present hold on the laity, to risk losing this by enlightening the people and dispelling from their benighted minds the superstitions which have been accumulating for ages and have made them the abject, unthinking worshipers they are. Surely the clergy of the ancient churches in the Near East would not willingly undermine with their own hands the foundations of the authoritative rule and prestige they have enjoyed from time immemorial. They are not only reluctant to do it, but too cautious even to hint at its being done.

But there is another obstacle militating against reform by the ecclesiastics of the oriental church. It is their belief that the enlightenment of the masses must inevitably lead to the exercise of their thinking faculties, and thought and discussion always lead to the raising of questions and the airing of differences which finally end in controversy and schism. Since the solidarity of the church, which ranks first in the minds of the Eastern clergy, would be threatened by

such a course of action, they naturally are afraid of it and opposed to it. There are bishops and priests now living who are otherwise blameless from the standpoint of worldly vices or shortcomings, yet who assiduously keep their flocks off the dangerous track of religious discussion and investigation.

In citing the foregoing hindrances to every effort at reform within the Eastern churches, I have spoken of ignorant clergy, worldly-minded clergy, selfish clergy, power-seeking clergy, and conservative clergy. But they are not all. There are those among them who are downright culprits, abstaining from no vulgar vice whatever if it will only lead to more influence or more wealth. There is no exaggeration in this assertion. I have personally known some who would quite willingly incite one party in their community to a bloody fight with another party solely for the sake of saving their own interests. Once I saw a clergyman taking part himself in such a fight. I have known a bishop very intimately who for twenty long years laid his hands on church property and funds yielding a yearly income of over ten thousand dollars and destined for the support of the public institutions of the community, and who appropriated the proceeds of these funds as if they were his own, thus amassing a considerable personal fortune. He was able to silence the complaining clergy by allotting a goodly sum to each, but the educational institutions

and works of philanthropy in the community he utterly neglected. Finally he left his parish and went forth to live among kinsmen, there to squander the great fortune he had amassed.

It would be untrue of the situation as a whole, however, were the reader to conclude that not a single oasis relieves the sight of the wanderer, tired of the great stretches of barren waste. There are some among the clergy of the ancient Christian churches in the Near East who would be a credit to any community: learned, devout, God-fearing and irreproachable. But they are few, very few, and useless as a factor in reform, for reasons explained above. During my long years of experience I have come in contact with some sixty clergymen of all ranks, and I could pick from among them no more than two saintly souls who really deserve to be called men of God. I am quite convinced that this proportion holds true throughout the different sections of our ancient Eastern churches.

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The situation described in this chapter presages a very gloomy future for the church in the Levant. Already signs of decadence are apparent, in the increasing number of members severing their connection with the mother church in order to join the recently organized evangelical groups, in the multiplying instances of clergy returning to the ranks of laity, in

the decreasing number of churchgoers, and in the rising tide of doubt and skepticism—a natural reaction from the gradual disillusionment of the more intelligent in recent years. Of the fifteen dioceses under the patriarchate of Antioch in Syria, there is not one where long-standing strife of some sort has not been dividing the community and the clergy into two or more antagonistic parties, ever conspiring, ever intriguing. The struggle in some cases has been so bitter, and the two sides have been so uncompromising, that entire households have been led to sever their membership and join the Latin church. In another place the discontent has been so real and acute that the bishop on one side and half the church community on the other are still waiting impatiently for an opportunity to pounce on their opponents. Still another large bishopric fares little better, although it is the largest, wealthiest, and most intellectual in the whole land.

The same story may be told of the Jerusalem see. For years the church there has been the prey of dissensions over the property of the old Greek Fraternity of the Holy Sepulchre. The parties were so unshakable in their views that the British Government recently found it imperative to interfere. Of course any solution eventually reached in regard to the object of dissension seldom removes the bitter spirit of enmity originally engendered. As long as the at-

mosphere remains electrified, the least occasion for difference gives the spark that brings on the thunder and lightning.

In Egypt the Orthodox patriarchate, occupied recently by a well-known Greek ecclesiastic, faces a serious problem in race rivalry. The Greeks claim supremacy by virtue of numbers and as guardians of the faith, while the Syrian elements are just awakening to the fact that their legitimate rights have too long been overlooked.

Very obviously a state of unstable equilibrium exists in the Eastern church, necessitating sooner or later complete reorganization ecclesiastically, and considerable reform in polity as well as in ritual. One might argue that the evidences of discord and decay cited above and the presence of ignorant or unprincipled clergymen characterize any church community anywhere, and therefore cannot be taken as a sure sign of decadence and imminent collapse. My answer is that in few sections of the world have these characteristics been so widespread and continuing.

Nevertheless, every man with an optimistic turn of mind and sufficient foresight will recognize in the present disintegration and discontent throughout the old oriental churches the precursor of a great upheaval which may bring with it radical changes for the better. All signs show that the reform is coming from within, whence all permanent, genuine and far-

reaching reforms in church and state have always proceeded. Voices from America, clear, sincere and authoritative, are heard every once in a while pleading for such reforms. Lately a well-known leader of the Syrian colony in New York, educated and wealthy, addressed an open letter to the Greek Orthodox clergy, disclosing a great many weaknesses and abuses in church government and worship, and voicing the ardent desire of thousands of well-meaning church members for radical reform. Naturally, his appeal was scoffed at by the majority of ecclesiastics, but fortunately there were some among them who admitted that his criticisms were fair. In Tripoli the reform movement is gaining ground every day. In Aleppo the nucleus of a reform party has been organized by the younger men to check the oppressive despotism and absurd pretensions of the priests. A significant sign of the times is the fact that this party is made up of Orthodox and Catholic men of many sects, all well educated and of respectable social standing. In Egypt and Palestine, where the higher Orthodox clergy are recruited largely from the Greek element, the chasm between the Greek and the native Syrian or Arab element is widening, the Greeks considering themselves guardians of the faith and therefore entitled to exercise a sort of tutelage over the native population professing their creed. Recently the relations between these two racial groups

have become so strained that the Syrian Palestinian or Arab element are seriously contemplating ways and means of setting up their own independence and building and supporting a separate church of their own.

With the defeat of the Greek army in Smyrna three years ago and with the coming into power of the new Turkish party, averse to all clerical or ecclesiastical domination, there came the downfall of the sultanate and caliphate in Turkey, and with it that of the Greek Orthodox patriarchate occupying the Constantinople see, first in rank among the four existing patriarchates, viz., Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. This was a severe blow to Greek pride. As a result there sprang into being several parties, each favoring a different policy for the recuperation of ecclesiastical prestige. Thus factions and controversies ran rife until the need was felt for a world council or conference, where representatives of all the independent Greek Orthodox churches in the world might meet and discuss various questions of dogma and ritual, as well as matters of a more temporal nature, such as the reform of the Eastern calendar, modification of the customs relating to the celibacy of clergy, greater freedom in marriage laws, less strictness in regulations of fasts, a more liberal policy in autonomous church government, etc. The conference was held in Greece, but

was not a success owing to the fact that the Egyptian, Palestinian and Syrian sees sent no delegates. A few decisions were made, but due to the limited representation of the conference these are not likely to be universally accepted. Consequently the object of the conference was not attained.

The feeling is spreading among the thinking classes everywhere that some sort of conference should be called by the heads of the Eastern Orthodox Church for the discussion of ways and means of bringing it up to date. It is expected that very shortly the patriarch of Alexandria will call a preliminary conference to prepare the way for this more comprehensive congress later. The Antioch patriarchate is planning to send learned delegates to participate in these preliminary discussions. Among the more significant themes contemplated is that of Christian unity. This is an extremely complicated project, for it necessitates uniting the various independent Orthodox churches of the Near East to the great family of friendly and kindly disposed churches of the West, with whom the differences are not so radical nor so irreconcilable—such ecclesiastical orders as the Anglican and to a certain extent the Lutheran churches. The attempt to meet on common ground will be greatly helped by stressing major points of agreement among the various communions. This movement toward Christian unity is approved and

championed by the enlightened classes of all religious sects, and it is hoped it will bear good fruit, such as came from the miniature conference held in Egypt in December, 1926, in the house of the Belgian Consul, and attended by representatives of a number of churches.

One main hindrance to any genuine reform of the Eastern church lies in the long established system of Turkish rule by virtue of which the heads of the different churches were recognized as supreme not only in ecclesiastical and spiritual but also in social, judicial and political affairs. The position of the higher ranks of the clergy in the Near East, therefore, is very different from that of similar officers in America, where the pastors restrict themselves to the purely religious concerns of their respective communities, and find ample justification and opportunity for cooperation with the clergy of other religious sects. Not so in the East. Politics is incompatible with the highest ideals of integrity and genuine self-denial, especially in the more backward countries. Moreover, political rivalry among the chiefs of various sects excludes all possibilities of fraternity or mutual understanding, and the turbid atmosphere of jostling and hustling after political advancement and worldly gain is far from favorable to religious calm and quiet so essential to those promoting religious reforms. Not until a system of rule is introduced into

the East by the mandatory governments obliging the clergy to confine their activities strictly to religious matters can any real advance be expected.

In conclusion by way of summary, I believe that our ancient Eastern church stands in need of extensive reform in creed and system of worship as well as in organization and administration. I believe that this church, with all due reverence to its origin and past services as guardian of the faith, has now become obsolete in many respects and stands in need of rejuvenating influences. I believe that any system of religion which, either through the defects inherent in its very nature or through misapplication or misinterpretation of its precepts by the responsible authorities at its head, encourages superstition at the expense of rationalism and substitutes cheap formalism for vital life, laying stress on ritual rather than on inward attitudes and aspirations, as is the case today with the ancient Eastern church, has failed in its highest ministry and therefore needs to be purified and revived.

A vivid contrast has been supplied by the introduction into these lands of the Protestant evangelical system of religion from the West. Spiritual and practical in its essence, it has appealed to many thinking individuals and its influence has been very great. Its promoters were not always wise in their methods of presenting their faith to the peoples of the Near East, but on the whole they deserve much credit. We have

reached a stage when proselyting is no longer an advisable course of action for Christian missionaries. I myself have never believed in it. Outside influences challenging reform and newness of life in the ancient Eastern church have reached their limit. What is needed from now on is greater influence from within. Let the missionaries therefore encourage the reform of these ancient churches from within. This suggests the figure of the leaven that leavens the whole lump. I believe that the proper course of action for the modern missionary henceforth consists in encouraging, morally and materially, every well directed movement for reform born within the Eastern churches and championed by enlightened members of these churches both clerical and lay. Along this line lies the supreme opportunity of modern missions from the West. The spirit of freedom that has awakened whole nations and races following the World War has prepared the way, and has predisposed every mind in the Near East to all sorts of radical reforms and heretofore dreaded changes in all realms of life and thought.

AMIN BUTRUS HILAL

Aleppo, Syria

V

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE WESTERN CHURCH

WHAT I shall write concerns Egypt, though I believe a good deal of it, if not all, applies equally well to most of the other countries of the Near East. Permit me to begin by saying, for justice's sake, that the Protestant evangelical church of the West has exerted a good influence on our people. It has aroused our country from its deep sleep and has been a chief factor in bringing Egypt to understand her real self, her need, her opportunities and her responsibility, especially in the presence of Jesus Christ her Master and Lord, whom she has come to know through the Holy Bible, which she respects and appreciates. The Western church has not created a new religion and it has not given us a new book. Instead it has done what Western archæologists have attempted in unearthing our own buried treasures of civilization which remained hidden from us for more than seven thousand years. The Western church has brought back the inheritance of old. In so far as the Western church has grasped this fact and followed this lead, she has been useful and a blessing to the Near East. In this chapter I shall speak of both the

beneficial and the harmful contributions of Western Christians.

In the religious life of our people the first helpful service of the Christian West found its most fitting expression in the translation of the Bible into the Arabic language. This translation was nearer to the original and more correct in language than any we had had before. The Western church also published this translation and made it available to the average man. Fifty years ago one could scarcely find a single printed copy of the Bible anywhere, except such copies as were owned by a very few prominent persons or in the possession of the bishoprics. Even in these bishoprics it was difficult to find a complete copy. When, however, the first Christian missionaries came to the Near East they immediately began to distribute the Bible. Although at first their knowledge of our language was very slight, or rather, nil, still their distribution of the Bible was a most effective method of preaching. By putting the Bible into the hands of everyone, they encouraged the illiterate to learn to read and to commit to memory verses and chapters.

The priests of the ancient Christian churches in our land were uneducated, and ignorant of the Bible. The people followed and obeyed them blindly until Christianity itself became corrupt and unreal. Moslems lost respect for it as they saw so-called Christians conducting themselves carelessly, lying, cheating,

and above all practising usury and using strong drink—things not permitted by the Moslem religion. It was when the Bible was published in Arabic that the people discovered what true Christianity was. They saw then that Christianity was not form or ritual or sacred celebrations, but life and spirit, and thus they began to conform their own lives to the teachings of Christ. We cannot forget what an influence the Bible has over the lives of men, morally, socially and spiritually. Even the Moslems regard this new sect of Christians with extreme respect and confidence. Today about 125,000 volumes of the Scriptures are published annually in Moslem lands by the American and British Bible Societies.

In the wake of Bible translation and distribution came true religious and ethical teaching. The Christians of the old church were full of superstitious ideas and mistaken beliefs which tended to make them no better than their non-Christian neighbors. This was because the Bible was little known to them. Their church leaders were uneducated. They suffered bitter persecutions from the unjust rulers of their Arab conquerors. All this made it easy for uneducated or biased religious teachers to spread wrong beliefs and false teachings among the people, such as the belief in the intercession of the dead saints, in the ability of the priests to bind and absolve, in witches, devils and fortune tellers, beliefs which represent a mixture

of old Egyptian, Assyrian, Moslem and Catholic superstitions. The watchword of the missionaries from the West was "Back to the Bible." Those who had accepted the Bible as their only guide of faith and conduct tried in vain to convince their fellow churchmen, the nominal Christians, to do likewise. After much persecution and privation they were obliged to separate themselves from fellowship with ancient Christians.

After this separation from the old church and its disordered and idolatrous ritual, these groups organized their own church modelled after the churches of the West. The missionaries taught us by word and example how to worship, to come to church punctually, to sit in silence and in reverence, to unite in prayer, to sing hymns and to give systematically. They introduced the piano and the organ into our churches, though these are still forbidden by the old church. In many of these old churches today the people still enter and come out without any participation in the service, which is carried on entirely by the priests in the old Coptic language, a language not understood even by the priests themselves. In our Protestant evangelical churches all this is quite different. The preacher gives his sermon in the language spoken by the people, who listen attentively to all that is said. Nothing is heard during the sermon but their breathing. Certainly we owe this new order of

worship and this reverence to the example of the Western churches.

Under the influence of Western missionaries the standard of the Christian ministry has been raised. None have been accepted as ministers of evangelical churches who were not well educated, pious and conscious of a divine call. Thus a new class of ministers has been created in the Near East which has won the respect and admiration even of the old churches. As a profession the ministry has been exalted in the sight of young men to whom formerly it appeared to include only the uneducated and the sluggards. Each minister in an evangelical church receives a certain allowance raised by the members of his congregation toward his living expenses. This is just as it is in the West. The people look up to their minister. He has become the leader, the manager and the teacher in all the concerns of his flock, whether in their household affairs, their social and political interests, or, above all, in religious matters. Thus in one person the minister may be the guide in household affairs, engineer, builder, artisan, agricultural adviser, politician, editor, singer, poet and spiritual teacher!

If a minister cannot meet all these requirements his people are disappointed. There are in Egypt alone about one hundred Protestant evangelical pastors; about seventy-five of these have built churches and manses, opened schools for girls and boys under their

supervision, and gained great influence in community and government circles. Many of them have been examples in simple and orderly living. They and their works were not native products but were introduced among us by the Western church, to which we are most grateful.

The giving in ancient churches of the Near East is neither systematic nor intelligent. Much of it tends to create a class of idlers and drones. The Western church has taught its people the church budget system, together with regularity in giving and discrimination in choosing causes worthy of support. Many members now give at least one-tenth of their income. They divide their gifts wisely among evangelistic, educational, and benevolent objects such as orphanages, hospitals, etc. The evangelical church in Egypt, for instance, has a membership of approximately 18,000. Last year they gave more than $120,000, or almost seven dollars per member. By organizing their giving they are able to distribute what they give more intelligently and to support more worthy causes. The following incident will serve to illustrate. In 1919 I felt that our Christian laymen were not doing their share in the activities of the church. Some of the elders were asked to join me in prayer and planning. After the publication of some articles in the church paper of which I am editor, explaining what the laity were doing in the Western

church, a Laymen's Missionary Movement was launched. At once the men of the church responded. One of them now contributes $1,000 annually, another $500, and so on. All these contributions go to the promotion of home missionary effort.

In the old church the clergy only are responsible for the church activities. In the new evangelical movement every individual layman is given a place of recognition and service. Membership means responsibility. This is a most significant contribution from the West. When the first Christian missionaries began their work they insisted that every convert become a worker in the field. In recent years many church members began to neglect their evangelistic duty and throw responsibility back upon the pastor. It was for this reason that the Laymen's Missionary Movement and the Christian Endeavor Society were organized.

Formerly family worship was a very rare thing. When people had it, it usually amounted to a mere repetition of the Psalms and some memorized petitions written by the saints of centuries gone by. Such worship had no influence on the daily life of the family or of the individuals under one roof. The Western church has taught us how to worship as a family. This family worship has had its results in the life of the parents, the children, the servants, and in the daily life of our Christian communities in

general. It has led also to secret prayer and the observance of the quiet hour. All these useful helps in devotion were foreign in their origin and have had most beneficial results among us.

The evangelical church organized by the missionaries soon became a model for the old church, through its educated ministers, its ecclesiastical organization, and its religious, educational and social activities. The results were seen to be good, and, awakened by example, the old churches were quick to imitate. They now prepare preachers who practise preaching and sing hymns just as do the evangelicals whom at first they considered heretics. They have lately organized Sunday schools, in which they teach the Bible and distribute to children the same picture cards that are used by the International Sunday Schools the world over. They have their own Y.M.C.A. Strong influences toward reformation along other lines are now at work in these old churches.

Moslems are greatly in the majority throughout the Near East. In Egypt, for example, there is only one Christian, old or new, to fourteen Moslems. In all Moorish lands the native Christians were forced to become Moslems during the early invasions of Islam. In Arabia there are few Christians to be found. In Syria and Iraq Christians are very few compared with the Moslems, although the new activities of the evangelical churches, with their

schools, hospitals, benevolent societies, Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., etc., have been as good leaven in every community. Some Moslems, though very few, have been converted to Christianity. The others, especially those leaders who were educated in the mission schools or have been influenced by the life and literature of evangelical Christians, are now doing their best to reform the Moslem faith. They try to interpret their Koran in the light of reformed Christianity, even if this interpretation may be at variance with the text.

For instance, these Moslem leaders desire to liberate woman and make her equal to the man in social status and individual rights, though it is declared in the Koran that in inheritance the man's share is twice the woman's, that she is a slave to the man, and that when she comes to maturity she must not appear even before her relatives, must not attend the place of worship with a man, and must not take the leadership or control of any affair. The movement on behalf of our women today owes much of its momentum to the Christian movement from the West. It represents a desire to emulate the best Christian womanhood.

The revival of education in the Near East today is chiefly due to the Christian missionaries. With much foresight they realized from the beginning that there was no better way to deliver their message of love than by teaching it to the children in their

schools and thus preparing a generation of educated Christian men and women. Therefore they planted educational lighthouses in different parts of the East, such as Assiut College in Egypt, the American University in Cairo, the American University in Beirut, Syria, Robert College in Constantinople, and still others in Smyrna, Tarsus, and elsewhere in Turkey. These lighthouses for many years have been shining in the darkness. They have enlightened minds, built strong Christian characters, and prepared men and women who have been and still are our most illumined leaders in all movements toward reform and reconstruction in these lands.

The first girls' school in the East was opened by a missionary of the West. At the time he was looked upon as a social destroyer. It is related that a prominent gentleman came to this missionary and said earnestly and indignantly, "Don't you know that you do us harm by opening such a school?" "How?" replied the astonished missionary. "Beware," said the man. "No young man will consent to marry the girl who reads and writes." In spite of opposition and misunderstanding, however, the missionaries continued in their work till the people themselves began to realize that no real progress is possible as long as women are not educated. Today no ambitious young man plans to marry any but an educated girl. At first the obstacles in the way of educating our girls were

like mountains, too high to surmount, but by patience and perseverance the missionaries have at last won for us a great victory. The bitter opponents of this movement are now among its most ardent promoters. Those who live fifty years from today will see what miracles the education of our girls has wrought.

The missionaries of the West were the leaders also in educating the young men of the East. There was a time when the American Mission in Egypt had sixty primary schools for boys to the government's two, besides those in the capital city. Now the Egyptian government is planning to have compulsory education throughout the country. It has recently opened a university in Cairo. The Moslem institutions, which have followed a teaching program medieval both in content and in method, have begun to include modern sciences and to use modern educational methods. All these reforms have been encouraged and accelerated by the work and influence of the Western churches.

The religious and educational reforms introduced by the Western missionary naturally had their result in widespread social improvements which space will not permit me to describe in detail. Let it suffice to mention here a few such improvements as samples of many.

Before the advent of the Western missionary, woman in general was regarded without respect.

She was despised as an inferior being. She suffered severe injustice in every period of her life, from childhood to old age. Social life as a result was maimed, unnatural and handicapped in every sense. The elevation of woman to the high position she enjoys now has been made possible chiefly by the teaching and service of the Western missionary. The mother, wife or sister was not permitted formerly to sit at the same table with the males of her family. She had no right or training to take charge of her own affairs. Now, having been educated in the mission or government schools, she becomes a new sister, wife and mother. In her emancipation we have experienced a revolution in all life. She has created the home, which was unknown in the East. Here is the secret of every reformation and advance.

Better child welfare is a natural result of educating woman. It is a sad fact that because of the ignorance of the majority of mothers the death rate among our children is fifty per cent in the first year of birth. Between the first and the fifth year the average is thirty per cent. Today everyone is aroused to the necessity of better training in the care of children. The missionaries of the West have been the pioneers in all child welfare work. They have opened schools for our children. They have cared for the children of our streets who were unhoused, neglected and despised. They have founded hospitals and

nurseries for children. They have taught us by example—in rearing their own children—how to care for ours.

Boy Scouts, clubs for girls and boys, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Christian Endeavor groups and similar organizations have been imports from the Western church introduced by the missionary. These have helped our younger generation and have given them a better start in life. They have contributed physically, mentally and spiritually. Even the Moslems appreciate these efforts for youth and many of them have joined the Y.M.C.A. or the Y.W.C.A. Some of them, imitating what we have done, have started institutions of their own which are very successful.

The Western church did not merely teach liberty but enjoined it on all its new congregations in the East. The earliest missionaries made it an obligatory condition on every Christian convert to emancipate his slaves. Some sons and daughters of those emancipated slaves were taught by their Christian masters and now occupy good positions in society and in the church. Thus the church evangelical confronted the Moslem world with a shining example, and made it easy for the more general promotion of the cause of liberty later on. Through the Protestant evangelical churches freedom was given to all and by all without one drop of blood being shed. It is now the law of

the whole Near East that there is neither white nor black. All are one before God and the law.

Having once come into contact with the West, the Near Easterner cannot retain his old philosophy of life. Sooner or later he changes many basic beliefs and practices. He was formerly controlled by fatalism. This led him to idleness and consequently to poverty and disease. Having seen the Westerner diligent about his business, observed his order, punctuality, economy, and home life, he began to imitate him. Slowly everything changed. He began to think of the future of his family and of his personal responsibility to others and to his community.

In political life the Western church has had a great though indirect influence upon the entire Near East. It affected first the relation between the governor and the governed. Eastern governments were formerly despotic and unjust. This spirit of despotism spread to every division of society from the king on the throne to the father in the home. The teachings of the Western missionary about freedom and democracy led our people to see that they themselves are the real source of political authority and that the government exists for their service. Government is from the people and for the people. We discovered that this is one of the foundation stones of Western civilization. In Egypt now we have a parliamentary form of government which is four years old.

This representative system has existed in the evangelical churches founded by the missionaries for seventy years. No doubt, in the democratic character of our church organizations we have the roots of the fruitful tree of constitutional government.

Individual rights and equality of individuals before the law have existed for a long time in the Near East, but only on paper. The rich have always been the absolute masters of the poor. The Moslem has long exercised full control over the Christian, his life, his household and his possessions. Gradually the message and spirit of the evangelical churches have revealed the significance of the individual in society, and certain of his eternal and inalienable rights. This revelation has spread to all classes, and what started as the teaching of Christianity through the missionary has gone on and on until it has ended in the measure of political liberty which most of the Eastern countries enjoy today.

Seventy years ago it was not possible for the Eastern Christian to speak openly about his religion. He was threatened with persecution or death if he said anything complimentary of his newly accepted faith. On the other hand the Western missionaries, under the protection of treaties, were able to preach, discuss and enumerate the virtues of Christianity. They taught boldly the value of man, irrespective of his economic condition. Gradually the old despotic re-

strictions were removed. Native Christians also were allowed to preach and publish books praising their religion and commending it as the only and best way of salvation. They were privileged to meet their countryman, the Moslem, on equal ground in discussion and argument. Now our reconstructed governments have granted the people religious freedom.

Formerly our prisons were nurseries of every kind of germ, both physical and moral. The Western idea of the real purpose of punishment came to us through the missionary, resulting in a great change in the plan of prison buildings, in the treatment of the prisoners, and in prison life in general. Preachers, Christian and Moslem, are now appointed by the government to visit the prisoners regularly. Industrial trades are taught. There are now modern reformatories for boys, special cells and private places for women. All these changes are the result of Western ideas, actually carried out by Christians in the West, and communicated to us through the Christian missionary.

And yet, with all these blessings which we acknowledge from the Western church, we cannot, in the interest of fairness and truthfulness, omit reference to some things which we wish had not been brought to us from the West. As a matter of fact, we do not believe that the occidental agents intended to vex us with them, but because they were accustomed to them at home and did not realize their harm, or because

they did not understand exactly the mentality of the East and the consequent effect of some things inadvertently introduced, the effect of many of these things has been altogether bad. Regretfully I mention some of them here.

The first concerns too much democracy in the church and in our social life. The Westerners came to us from countries where the democratic life has been practised for many centuries. No relation or activity of their life has been uninfluenced by this democratic spirit. To us, to whom it came so suddenly, it was like a too brilliant light in a small dark room. We had been living under absolute autocratic, almost despotic, rule. Suddenly the Western missionaries appeared with their gospel of individual freedom. They proclaimed it in the home, in the church, and in social life. The direct result of this sudden change was to lower the standard of obedience to parents in the home, to lessen the attitude of reverence toward ministers and leaders in the church, and to create new difficulties in the social relations of daily life. Evidently disturbances and readjustments take place in every revolutionary epoch. We can only hope that individual intemperance and license, to which new-found freedom often leads men, will eventually give way to self-control and the golden mean.

The second effect concerns the decay of our ancient

spirit of hospitality. I do not know which to accuse for this loss, Western civilization or the Western church or both. It is evident that the increase in industrial activities, emphasis on family life, the practice of economy in business as well as at home, and the increase of competition in everything, have changed many old habits, good and bad. Half a century ago no house in the East, whether rich or poor, was without its guest room or rooms where the stranger always found food and lodging. Relatives and friends used to visit and entertain each other frequently. In the newly built houses there is no arrangement for strangers or guests. The hotel system obtains even in small villages. For this passing away of the gracious hospitality of the East, who is to blame? No doubt a share of the censure must be placed at the door of the Western agents of the church.

The third effect concerns our attitude toward the Lord's Day. The pioneer missionaries were very strict in consecrating and observing one day of rest in seven. The old churches were not particular in this matter. Consequently our people used to resort to work after the morning service on Sunday just as they did on any week day. Later the missionary of the West taught the wisdom of abstinence from all work. One of them led in a campaign to close government offices, at least to have all Christians exempted from work on that day. The British Resident at that time was almost

inclined to grant this request. Now the example of the modern Westerner would make a similar request seem inconsistent if not ridiculous. The Lord's Day in his judgment is the day of recreation for the body, for games and sports of every kind. Just as the West revived in us the habit of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy, so now Westerners mislead us to desecrate this day by indulging in all manner of worldly recreations. What is the remedy?

The fourth effect concerns the practice of the extremes of modern civilization by many Westerners. In this case not even the Western Christian missionaries, especially the teachers, both men and women, can escape all responsibility and blame. They cannot realize the shame it brings to Eastern eyes to see naked arms and necks, promiscuous dancing, attendance at questionable theatres and cinemas. If all the men and women of the present-day Western church were like the first missionaries who said with St. Paul, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful, but all things edify not," the native evangelical churches of the Near East would be kept stronger and might win more victories. No doubt most of the missionaries are just as they ought to be, but to find one here and another there who ostentatiously liberates himself from restrictions and makes no effort to study the harmful effects on the people among whom he works, inevi-

tably weakens the spirit of moral and religious resistance on the part of newer Christians.

This last point calls for some further words on the quality of the modern missionary. Though the missionaries have been greatly increased in quantity, they are not all of the same rich quality. Some of them appear not to have a real conviction on what they have consecrated themselves to do, and thus lightly destroy what others have painfully built up. Some are defective in intellectual equipment, so much so that they are easily discovered and quickly despised. Others come to the East carrying the West about with them. They do not want to admit that they have left the West and have come to the East, or to say with St. Paul, "Unto the Easterner I become as an Easterner, that I might gain the Easterners." Nothing hurts the feelings of one in the Near East more than to see the missionary, his Christian brother and teacher from the West, keeping aloof from him and seemingly considering himself of a higher caste because of color and nationality. The Easterner is very sensitive, keen in observation, and quick to be offended. If the Westerner could only sacrifice a few of his old habits and beliefs when he comes to the East and make himself a real brother to the Easterner, he could win him very easily.

The Easterner recognizes that the Westerner is more advanced than he, and wishes to learn from

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him. He believes that the missionary, preacher or teacher, has no interest except that of disinterested human service. If the missionary could maintain in the Eastern mind this belief in his essential sincerity, if he could consider his Eastern brother on the same level with himself without regard to color, nationality or social prestige, if he could deny himself some of his old usages and habits and adopt some new ones from the East, then and only then could the Western church be successful in her missionary undertaking and fulfill her task of evangelizing the non-Christians of the Near East. Then and only then would Moslems see the spirit of Christ himself—the spirit of sacrifice and service—manifested in the lives of the apostles of the twentieth century.

In conclusion I confess my belief openly, on behalf of the people of the Near East, that all we have of knowledge, religious life, social and political progress, family order and industrial improvement, is due to the Western church. This we declare before all the world and recognize as a moral and material debt. We fervently pray the gracious Lord to reward the Western church for all she has given and still gives of men, women and money. The Western church has done its work, I suppose, from two motives. First, from the motive of Christian love which "seeketh not her own," like the Master who did not please himself. Second, from the desire to pay her

debt to the Near East. The Near East was the birthplace of all Old Testament prophets and of Jesus himself. It was the birthplace of true religion. We hope by the help of the Western church that we shall be able in the near future to repay our debt to those of our brothers who are still without the enjoyments of life, both here and hereafter. We are anxiously looking forward to the day when we can send our missionaries to other lands and so help to make Jesus King of kings and Lord of lords in all the earth. Amen.

METRY S. DEWAIRY

Cairo, Egypt

VI

COOPERATION FROM THE WEST

§ THE BALKANS

AN extensive, almost unlimited, field of opportunity for service on the part of the Western church may be found in all the Balkan countries. For centuries under foreign oppression, ravaged and impoverished by a series of recent wars, with populations the greater percentage of which are still living under conditions which in the United States would be considered as utter destitution, overburdened by exorbitant taxes and threatened repeatedly with unemployment, these countries are in greater need of economic, educational, moral and spiritual assistance than America in its affluence is capable of imagining. To paint the picture adequately in a few lines is impossible even for one who knows Bulgaria well. Many are the ways in which the American churches can help my people, but the following ways perhaps would be most effective just at this time.

The economic standard of living in the Balkan countries is very low. Though government schools are successfully dealing with the problem of illiteracy and are offering modern educational opportunities,

yet when it comes to manners, habits, and ways of living, very little improvement is evident. Above all else these countries need character-building institutions. The few American mission and private schools in the Balkans have done excellent work. Increased aid should be given them to the end that they may extend their activities, and be in a position to engage teachers with the best possible preparation for their work. The American schools already in existence might well undergo reorganization with a view to meeting some of the new demands. There is a need also for the establishment of schools which would aim to encourage young men and women to improve living conditions in their own homes and villages. The need in the Balkan countries is not for institutions which will produce more office seekers, but for schools where the peasants, who constitute so large a percentage of the total population, will have an opportunity to learn the elementary laws of hygiene, as well as to receive instruction in some useful trade or occupation such as farming, carpentry, etc. Kindergartens are greatly needed throughout the Balkans. Scholarships might be established for promising students who would study in such institutions as Robert College and the Sofia American Schools, returning to teach in their native towns for a specified number of years.

Another problem on which the Balkan peoples

need aid from abroad concerns the refugees. Bulgaria, for example, estimates that of its total population of five millions, 600,000 are refugees who have come in since the Great War, not to mention those who entered the country before and during the war. These refugees constitute a problem in that they are always ready to follow any movement, however extreme, which promises to relieve their sufferings even temporarily. In spite of its best efforts, the government to date has not been able to cope with the refugee situation successfully. Special funds are needed not only to provide for these people in their present need but also to aid them in the harder task of becoming self-supporting. One way to meet the refugee situation would be to build villages on government land and provide whatever is necessary to establish industries that promise to make the people self-supporting, at least in part. This plan has been tried in the refugee village near Bourgas which has already been organized and settled. An arrangement might be made whereby simple modern cottages could be built with foreign funds, and these rented to refugees on easy terms.

Hygenic conditions in the villages are deplorable, and the death rate is very high, especially among children. Here again the lack of sufficient funds hinders the health departments of our various countries in putting into effect the sanitation improvements so

desperately needed. Specialists to study the situation and cooperate with our governments, and district nurses to go among the villages and teach preventive measures, would be a godsend to these people.

There is real need for Christian missionaries from America who can combine their Christian witness with highly specialized Christian service. Only the most practical teaching and preaching are of much use in the Balkans, where men's thoughts are largely occupied with the day-by-day struggle for bread. Young men of character and influence, natives of the Balkans, should be encouraged to go into the ministry, and should be given as broad an education as possible. The church must be made a vital part of every community, and every member should be given a definite share in its activities. The Sunday schools need not only equipment, libraries, organs, etc., but, above all, trained teachers who will strive to dispel the general superstition and ignorance by teaching brotherly love and Christian service.

The continuous wars constitute the root of all evil in the Balkan countries. Permanent improvements cannot be made, standards cannot be raised, nor the people be rendered happier until lasting peace is made a reality—a task which requires most tremendous efforts. Here again is a great problem in the solution of which the Western church can help not a little. Through the schools, churches, peace societies and

literature, doctrines of peace can be taught. Along with the Bible, literature dealing with the political and economic results of war should be supplied and distributed even in the most secluded regions of the Balkans. Pressure should be brought on the governments of Balkan countries and on all state churches to revise their narrow, nationalistic school systems, their textbooks, and particularly their histories. Every possible means should be used to do away with traditional nationalistic hatreds, and to inspire the new generations with a horror of war and a willingness to cooperate on friendly terms.

IVAN MONEDJICOFF

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§ TURKEY

The last twelve years have been eventful in Turkey. The Great War dismembered it. The subsequent revolution completely changed its political, social, religious and economic outlook.

Before the war the Western churches were greatly interested in Turkey. How they can most acceptably assist now in our development, and what the attitude and objectives of their missionaries should be, we do not pretend to answer. We shall only attempt a few suggestions.

From the viewpoint of Christians of the ancient

church in this country (about 200,000 in Constantinople and 20,000 to 25,000 in Anatolia), the continuance of Western institutions, especially schools and colleges, is very desirable. They are needed more than ever as centers of moral and spiritual force and inspiration for the native Christians, though not as centers for political ends. No; politically, Christians here desire to be left alone with their own government. They have already paid too dearly for the interference of foreigners on their behalf. Nor do they desire sectarian, proselyting institutions. They do not want to be Protestants, in the narrow sense. They see in Western educational and humanitarian institutions an expression of pure disinterested Christian civilization, and in the men who direct them the personification of firm Christian manhood. To the community of 1,500 to 2,000 Protestants in Turkey, most of whom are Armenians, Western missionary activity means something more. This small community, if well organized and wisely supported and directed, may be of great service in the future evangelization of this country.

What should be the attitude of Western churches towards the Moslem population of this country? This is a more delicate and complicated question. An extraordinary political, social and religious upheaval has taken place. No country within the last decade has passed through such strange vicissitudes. An intense

revival of the spirit of nationalism, a successful war of independence, the abolition of the capitulations, the downfall of the caliphate and the sultanate, the establishment of the republic, the separation of state and religion, and the adoption of the Swiss civil code, are some of the revolutionary changes witnessed in Turkey. Polygamy is abolished by law, Turkish women are beginning to enjoy their natural rights, social reforms are being introduced, great efforts are made by government in the interests of popular education.

Turkey has high political, economic and social ideals. There is new wine in plenty, but often only old skins to put it in. Sometimes even these skins are torn and the new wine is spilled. Turkey wants to be Westernized, to get Western civilization. Only sometimes she is at a loss to distinguish between what is fundamental in Western civilization and what is only transient, spurious and perhaps harmful. Thus far the Turkish revolution has been largely destructive. The old régime has been abolished, the cake of custom smashed, old practices and conventions have been overthrown. Just now Turkey supremely needs constructive effort.

The veteran journalist Ahmed Jevdet Bey, writing about the New Year's festivities among Christians and regretting the dullness of the Moslem New Year, says: "What can we do to direct this joyless life of

ours towards a goal? We ought to change if possible the course of our social and individual life. We ought to enter in every sense into a new life. But how? To obtain this we ought to learn how to utilize our liberty. We notice that life is changed in the people who have attained liberty . . ."

This is a profound analysis of the situation. What the New Turkey needs most is a new life in every sense, politically, socially, economically, morally. But how are we to get it? Our dilemma suggests the great opportunity before the Christian churches of the West. Western institutions in this country may do a great deal; they may help us to attain that new life and develop it for the welfare of the nation.

In spite of the announced religious liberty, I know that preaching to Moslems in Turkey is still practically prohibited. That at least is now the unwritten law of the country. How long this glaring contradiction between theory and practice will last we cannot tell, but we are sure that sooner or later religious liberty will become a daily experience.

In the meantime the Western churches may be of great service to Turkey: first, by continuing here their former activities, such as mission schools and hospitals, Robert College and Constantinople Women's College, and by reopening some of the old schools and colleges that had to be closed during the war; second, by establishing industrial, agricultural, and if

possible commercial and mechanical training schools for boys and girls; third, by continuing and extending their publication work, translating some of the best books representative of Christian ideals and of civilization; fourth, by encouraging Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. activities, and establishing new centers for this type of Christian service in the interior; fifth, by closer personal contacts between Turkey and Christian Westerners, and by simpler living and a more disinterested and devoted life of service and love on the part of missionaries. The more the spirit of Christ becomes incarnate in the Western churches and people, the more successful their Christian workers will be in this country.

Religiously, Turkey is now in a critical condition. The former allegiance to Islam, especially among the educated youth and ruling classes, is broken. Many are becoming agnostic or indifferent. Others are unsettled and in hesitating mood. Some are really groping about to find the truth. Who knows, perhaps the time is not far off when Turkey may awaken to discover the fact that Western Christian civilization is impossible without Christ. Now is the time for the Western churches to help Turkey find Him who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

ANONYMOUS

§ PERSIA

Although it is many years since missionaries first came to Persia, and although in these years they have made unstinted and heroic efforts to evangelize our country, the real beginning of missionary work in Teheran, the capital city, dates from the year 1920, when ten Persian Moslems publicly accepted Christianity. In a sense, therefore, it is possible to say that Christian work in Persia has only begun.

Formerly if a Moslem became friendly with a Christian missionary he at once became the object of criticism and attack from fellow Moslems. He was threatened with the loss of his property and often his life. For these reasons no one dared to associate with the missionaries. Gradually a few of the Persian Moslems, who had seen the wise conduct and good morals of the American missionaries, came to the conclusion that these foreigners had no motive in living among them except to serve humanity. Considerations which led a number of Persians finally to this opinion were the missionary relief work in time of famine, the founding of the American College in Teheran, the work of the hospital there, the attitude of America toward the murder of the American Consul in Teheran in 1923, and the friendly conduct of missionaries themselves toward everyone they happen to meet.

The Persian people today are very different from what they were fifteen years ago, chiefly because of the change in their government from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, and the recent change in dynasties. There is hope that even more telling changes will take place in the future. The present, therefore, represents only the beginning of missionary opportunity and activity. The Persian church is like a child that cannot stand on its own feet; or like an unfinished arch from which the support cannot be removed until the keystone has been put in place. Not until the day when real religious liberty is given to Persia will the Christian church be able to take its place in the life of the nations and begin to be independent of mission support. In view of the progress which Christian work is making today and of the sure hope of still greater progress in the future, we believe that as the number of missionaries is increased the opportunity for service will multiply.

The founding of the American College in Teheran has attracted the attention of all classes of people in Persia. If its development can be expedited so that it will soon become a full ranking college, its contribution to the advancement of the work of Christ in Persia will be very great.

Since we Christians are looking forward to increasing changes in Persia, to the day of real religious

liberty, and to the day when Christian education will powerfully influence the development of the church of Christ, we believe the missionaries should begin at once to make preparations for the dawning of that day, so that when it comes the work of the gospel will not be delayed.

RAJAB ALI KHAN

Teheran, Persia

§ MESOPOTAMIA

This article is presented to friends in the New World and to all those who are interested in knowing something about a nook in the East which has until recently been forsaken.

I, as a member of the church of Mosul, or rather the church of Christ, the church which twenty centuries ago was scattered abroad, whose members went everywhere preaching the word of salvation, taking the message directly from the mouth of our Head, the Rock of Ages—I, believing in Christ and his church, deem it most important that the teaching of Christ be properly presented to the world. When as a Protestant I observe the divisions and sects of Christendom, I feel sure that there is something wrong in the presentation of Christian truth. It is obvious that several hundreds of denominations, sects and parties cannot all be emphasizing differences of

such importance as to justify continued separateness and even the rivalry which oftentimes prevails.

In the East, afflictions, persecutions and religious fanaticisms have done much to loosen the bonds which formerly kept the church true to its faith. For successive centuries our country has been the land of tribulations, revolutions, and every vicissitude, owing chiefly to changes of governments and religious wars. Having suffered the most, I dare say Mesopotamia is the land that has lost most self-confidence and unity.

Mesopotamia, situated between the "Two Rivers," has a population of over three millions. The majority are Moslems, who have been the cause of most of the tribulations which the Christians have endured over a period of thirteen centuries. Mosul, which contains more Christians than any other city in Iraq, has a population of over one hundred and twenty thousand, made up of different religious sects. The city is situated on the right bank of the Tigris, opposite which stand the ruins of Nineveh, capital of Assyria, the city to which God sent the prophet Jonah as a first missionary to preach repentance. This very message Mosul, the Nineveh of the twentieth century, needs today.

Mission work in Mesopotamia has not progressed satisfactorily, owing to the many changes which have taken place within the missions themselves. Several

missions have occupied the field successively, and on the departure of one and the advent of another, old foundations have been pulled up and new ones laid, a procedure always harmful to permanent and continuous growth. Besides, the Catholic churches have persistently exercised an influence hostile to the work of Protestant missions.

Since its organization the United American Mission has been doing wonderful work. The chief lack is funds; thousands of dollars are desperately needed and would greatly strengthen the efforts of missionaries. The ancient Christians hereabouts believe in the foreign missionary work of the Western evangelical churches, whose great deeds and bountiful charities are known all over the world.

Many have ignorantly asked why America and England send missionaries to the Near East, where the majority already know of Christ and of the Bible. We answer that the majority know very little of either. The Christian evangelical missionary has come to the Near East to tell of Christ to everyone, Christian and non-Christian. The long-bearded priests of the ancient Christian churches in the Near East are amazingly ignorant and simple. They know very, very little of the Bible, while the people have not been allowed to read the Bible at all. Many thanks are due both to the Protestant missionaries and the Bible societies of the West for the distribution of the

Scriptures. You seldom see a house nowadays without a copy of the New Testament, by which the veil of ignorance and fanaticism is being removed.

Whenever I look at my own people, so thirsty and hungry for the spiritual life, for education, for physical betterment, I feel like weeping over all these thousands and millions of Arabic-speaking people. We have in Mosul a small group of missionaries doing their best, attempting their utmost, but they are an engine without oil, the oil of finance. Our city needs several things, but its greatest need is Christian work. It needs several more Arabic-speaking missionaries of both sexes to work among both men and women. It needs, urgently and immediately, educated, spiritual men and women to open day and boarding schools, primary and secondary schools, to elevate the morals of children and youths. It needs, urgently and immediately, physical help, free hospitals where sicknesses may be cured. Let all those who are interested in good deeds and charity, all those who love to work in the field of our Lord Jesus, all those who wish to have a share in this work, behold a city opening its heart to accept the Word; ignorant and simple people eagerly longing for education, and feeble bodies waiting for healing ministry that only the medical missionary can bring. May the blessing of our Lord Jesus rest on those who hear my call and pray for us.

What is said for Mosul might be repeated and multiplied for Baghdad, the other great center of the United American Mission. And what of Mesopotamia as a country, beyond these two cities? Will anyone help us there?

S. A. Mesih

Mosul, Iraq

§ SYRIA

Centuries of oppression and despotism have left their terrible traces on this beautiful country, once the source of religious light, education, culture and material prosperity. For over a century efforts to help the people of this land have been exerted by different religious and educational organizations of Europe and America. In a few instances these efforts have been harmful, but by and large they have been beneficial. As we contemplate the work of reconstruction now before us we greatly need further cooperation on the part of the Christian West.

In the first place, Syria is in sore need of schools of agriculture. The same primitive agricultural methods practised in olden times are being used today by almost every farmer in this land. The people will be handicapped until they learn modern farming methods and the application of modern tools. A still greater misfortune than the lack of modern farming

methods and farming implements in Syria is the miserable state of the farmer. He is poor and generally illiterate. Schools of agriculture would raise his economic and intellectual status. They would also make agricultural pursuits attractive to the younger men and women. Syria, with its rich plains, fertile valleys and beautiful hills, is preeminently an agricultural country. What Syria needs are farmers trained in modern agriculture, using modern tools and methods.

Throughout the Near East, especially in Syria, Western competition has jeopardized and practically destroyed the native hand industries. No worthy effort has been exercised from any source to help the natives either to reorganize their old industries or to introduce new and modern ones. The West might establish industrial schools that would be a great blessing to this poor and unfortunate land. A school for machine repairing would be a great supplement to any modern industrial or agricultural institution.

Educationally, Christian America can do a great deal, and in fostering education she would be contributing spiritual good as well. The mission school is not a rival of the church; on the contrary, it is its right hand. It has been in the past, and will remain in the future, the most efficient means of missionary work. Aside from the benefits of ordinary education, a pupil learns in the mission school a great deal about the life

of Christ and his teachings, and cannot help being influenced by Christian truth and Christian ideals as exemplified by the life and teachings of the Nazarene. The simple plain teachings of Jesus, taken straight from the great source without outside additional explanations, are often more helpful to the youth than the theological addresses and discussions of the preachers. The mission day schools are the feeders of the Sunday schools. To appreciate their spiritual effect we need only think of the great benefits boys and girls receive in the exercise of a spirit of tolerance and good will, an attitude of mind sorely needed in this country where so many racial and religious groups exist.

The writer greatly regrets that the missionaries now are not as enthusiastic in their support of educational work as the early missionaries were. In saying this the writer is not finding fault with the missionaries in Syria—far from it; they are his personal friends, honest, sincere and well-meaning men and women. Perhaps they are restricted by lack of funds from America. In late years, instead of opening more schools, they have been closing a great many of the old ones. They are conducting this branch of their work entirely on a self-supporting basis. The missionaries pledge themselves to pay fifty per cent of the expense of village or town schools, provided that the headmaster collects from the school children the

other fifty per cent. Any deficit means closing the school. No plea is accepted, no excuse is favored. This is an excellent method under normal conditions; it helps the people to develop independence and self-support. But the recent revolution in Syria, following immediately upon the Great War, is having a depressing financial effect all over the country. In addition to the normal effects of war, there have been poor crops in many places, especially in the Buka district, reminding one of famine days in the times of Jacob and his children. Then came the plague, which has been killing our cattle by the thousands. All this has brought extreme misery to the larger part of Lebanon, thus making such a method of self-support as the one cited above almost unjust. But the law of the Medes and Persians does not change—the school that does not raise fifty per cent of its expenses must close. Finally, in addition to schools in the maritime districts, Syria is in need of more schools in the interior, which as yet has hardly been touched by missionary efforts.

Spiritually this country, like all the countries of the Near East, is thirsty for the plain and simple truth. The people are yearning to see the light. Yet at this time of great opportunities the missionaries are gradually withdrawing their financial aid. Instead of doubling their efforts they are laying the burden more and more on the struggling native churches,

which are made poorer each year by the flood of emigration into other lands. The economic situation in Syria is so bad that its sons and daughters are driven away to foreign shores. The writer is inclined to believe that the supporters in America, more than the local missionaries, are responsible for this policy of retrenchment. He is certain that it is a most unfortunate policy.

It has just been mentioned that the whole country is yearning after the simple truths of life. The different sects and religions in Syria were originally rich in religious truth. They were founded on pure spiritual principles. But these have been obscured and lost in a maze of dogmas and creeds and worship formulas. The missionaries and native preachers should not strive to bring creeds and dogmas to this country, which is already overstocked with them. Their emphasis should be laid on the pure spirituality of Christ, exemplified in his life as he moved and worked among the poor and lowly in Palestine.

In recent years Syria has been invaded by hosts of very tempting evil amusements in the guise of attractions from the civilized West, such as cheap theatres, dance halls, concert saloons, low-class cinemas, and alluring restaurants, which are pleasing and fascinating at the outset but which will ultimately ruin the youth of our land. What has been done to set up counter attractions as inviting and good as these hosts

of immoral devices are evil? Nothing whatever! With more funds and greater freedom from America, the missionaries could establish clean Y.M.C.A. halls, where attractive moral films could be thrown on the screen, interesting and instructive lectures delivered, good music, pleasant games, and athletic rivalries be introduced, thus diverting our youth from the places where only debasing influences are known.

The reader may say that all this does not belong to the program or objectives of foreign missions. Perhaps these undertakings were not in former programs, but ought not the modern missionary to change his methods and tactics to meet changed conditions and new dangers? Consider the American University of Beirut, formerly known as the Syrian Protestant College. In the broadest sense of the word it is a missionary institution. It does not aim to proselytize. It cares little for the outward garb or name the students carry. It aims at broadening the mind, uplifting the character, and bringing men nearer to their God and to their fellow-men. It is the most effective weapon we have for destroying the religious and social barriers that are separating the different inhabitants of these lands. It inculcates the spirit of justice, fair play, consecration, and brotherhood. It interprets to the Near East the highest ideals of American Christian people, and thereby bestows an inestimable benefit on all the peoples of the Near East.

The American University of Beirut needs the right schools as feeders in the villages and towns of Syria. More primary and secondary schools, both along the coast and in the interior, if established would greatly add to its influence and strength. The American Press in Beirut is putting forth each year many helpful and useful publications. We do not complain of what the missionaries are doing, but we are sorry because of what they are not doing and of that which they propose to give up. We ask for a policy of progress and expansion. We hate to see them forced to adopt any contrary policy, the policy of relinquishment and retrenchment. And we hope our young American friends in the United States will not consent to see the work of so many years restricted or abandoned. Rather let the good work go on with more vigor, expanding to include new enterprises and new methods, but always on the same sound basis, the basis of Christlike service and love.

SHEHADI A. SHEHADI

Beirut, Lebanon

§ EGYPT

Patrick Henry in one of his famous speeches said: "I know but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way to judge the future except by the past." If such a

statement be true, we may expect that every effort of the Western missionaries in the future will represent a step forward towards realizing the motives and objectives which characterized their first entrance into Egypt.

Simply to recall what has already been done by the Western church gives one a thrill of joy. The measure of cooperation in the past, it seems to me, ought to determine the character of their contribution in the future. To stop at a certain point is sometimes inevitable, but to stop short of complete cooperation would seem to be extremely unwise.

Perhaps some friends in Europe or America think that it is unnecessary and even absurd to send Christian missionaries into foreign lands. These people after one visit in Egypt would change their ideas, I am sure. A good lady once called on me without any previous acquaintance. She saw our church, our school, and some of our group who were introduced to her. Then she inquired about the history of the church. She was much surprised to know that American hands had cooperated in the establishment of these great institutions. She was more surprised to realize that what we are now is but a token of the fruitage of the work of the American mission in Egypt. I turned to her and said, "Dear lady, send more and more of these men and women, who have shone in the darkness and blazed as lights in the night of our ignorance,

who were morning stars to the modern life of Egyptian knowledge and development." We call to the leaders of America to realize that here is their great opportunity to contribute to the real life of Egypt. They should know that they are here to exert an influence that can never pass away.

I appeal to you, good friends, to come into closer touch with the educational work in Egypt. The Christian church here is confronted with overwhelming opportunities and responsibilities in education. I am sorry to report that the newly taught generation in our non-Christian communities knows nothing at all of Christianity. Can the Christian church, without help, supply her own children and these others with an adequate Christian training? To me it seems that the need of Christian education in Egypt demands your very generous future cooperation. The fate of the coming generation trembles in the balance. In America you do not feel this pressure, but in Egypt, where less than one in every fourteen persons is a Christian, it is a serious matter. Unless the Western churches are willing to cooperate with us, we cannot withstand the present drift. Thus I see that your great future contribution must be in the field of Christian education. Here is your most promising field for evangelizing Egypt. Here is where we would like to put hand to hand and shoulder to shoulder and endeavor to take Egypt for Christ. We are a very

limited minority. Unless we keep our traditions and our worship pure, we are likely to induct our children into an irreligious life.

What has produced the present leaders of the native evangelical church in Egypt? It is Assuit College, which has turned out men with the qualities of spiritual leadership. How true its aim has been! We need more schools of this type, schools faithful to the great cause of Christ. We do not want those colleges that are indifferent in applying the truth of Christianity. We want schools with a positive rather than a negative approach to Christian truth. We do not have capacity enough here to bear with negations. This tends to retard the influence of the Christian truth in a Moslem country, a country which entirely believes in the infallible inspiration of the Word.

Please send us men full of the spirit of God, like the venerable and upright men who have heretofore served the cause of missions in Egypt. We look for you to get us in touch with every new sound movement; with every new sound idea. We do not like to hear about heresies in the mother church and laxity of principles or conduct. We want you to come into our life as one with us. Send men who force themselves to accept our habits, our customs, our ways of thinking. We want men to suggest to us Livingstone and Stanley, Moffat and Morrison, men who count not even their lives dear unto themselves in

winning souls. We look for men worthy to follow in the footsteps of the long line of physicians who have served our country in the past; men who uplifted the name of Christ in their ministry of healing. What shall I say more? Please finish what you have already started. Please fully discharge your great responsibility.

But if you, after all, forget all else that I have mentioned, do not fail in this one thing from time to time—to pray for us. In the future as well as in the present your earnest prayers are essential. They soothe our spirit, encourage us in our work, help us glorify Christ in Egypt. Pray for our country, our men, our achievements, our endeavors, and the ultimate realization of our hopes. Pray for the struggling souls here, for the millions without Christ. Pray for the coming of Christ through the joint brotherly co-operation of the Western and native churches. Pray that we shall be ever co-workers and equal factors in propagating the Kingdom of Christ until we see his dominion extending over land and sea, in the East as well as in the West.

In the name of Egypt, which is still a Moslem country, I appeal to the young students of America to consecrate themselves to this cause of making Christ the dominant influence in the life of every Egyptian.

WAHBY BOULUS

Fayoum, Egypt

VII

YOUTH'S CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

EVERY nation, however young or small, may exercise a noble influence on the character and general well-being of every other nation. This fact puts a challenge before the youth of the whole world to make their social, economic and religious life worth sharing with others, and never to be reluctant to receive the best that others possess. To use commercial terminology, it is a challenge to youth around the world to exchange needed commodities.

Let us, with the idea of mutual need, discuss without prejudice what help the youth of the Near East is welcoming from the youth of the West, and what the Near East may have to offer the West in return.

The varied home influences, social atmospheres, educational environments and religious convictions of the youth of the Near East make them interesting subjects for psychological study and social observation. There are few things which they possess in common with Western youth which can serve adequately as data for comparison. Yet all those who have worked with the youth of the Near East say that they are as responsive to any new call or guidance as youth is in the West.

To begin with, let us consider the challenge we find in the physical life of our youth. Inasmuch as the death rate among children has been very high in the Near East, it is clear that those who have been spared and have attained the age of youth must have good bodies and strong physical resistance. Except for a few lessons on hygiene given in schools and sometimes given very poorly, most of our people until recently were in ignorance of the most elementary principles of good health. Some governments in the Near East are at last wide awake to the problem, and responsible medical officers are being sent to every village to fight disease and to enlighten the people concerning preventive measures. Such movements, however, are still in their infancy, and our public health officials really need help from countries further advanced and with longer experience. Malaria and trachoma are the prevalent diseases, though there is good reason to believe that the number of victims will rapidly lessen, once public health education becomes widespread.

Mission hospitals are found in widely scattered centers, but these are few in number and their lack of funds has put most of them at great disadvantage. Cannot some great hearts among the youth of the West give these institutions what is needed to keep them running efficiently, and thus release the medical missionaries from worry over funds and enable them

to devote their full strength to those needy ones who come to them for help?

A movement in the West on behalf of the Near East is needed to commission sincere and well-equipped nurses or doctors to visit our villages, preach the doctrine of good health, teach the people how to care for the sick, and instruct them in the ways of keeping well. There is a crying need for such traveling clinics, and these call for money and consecrated lives. The countries of the Near East are also in great need of education in child welfare and in the physical care of infants. Here the youth of the West can help, knowing also that a little effort will bring great results. One mistake continually made is the creation of new agencies where established agencies capable of meeting the need already exist. To my mind, half the energy and money which are spent by the new agencies would give the same or better results if contributed to agencies and forces already at work.

Most of the social activities of youth in the Near East await organization and development. Until recent years there has been little or nothing done for young people, nor have they been granted any freedom for or encouragement in self-expression. The little attempted for them in the past has too often been propagandist in character. Young people were brought together merely to listen and be dictated to, rather than to be given an opportunity to think for

themselves and to share in whatever was proposed or done. Naturally this has made youth suspicious and none too friendly to religious sectarian activities.

Of recent years, in some parts of the Near East, movements for children have been started, such as those for boy scouts and girl guides, and organized teams for athletics. In the majority of communities in the Near East, however, nothing of this sort has as yet been done. Special conditions make such work difficult. Home breeding and class divisions in the Near East emphasize the individual element in all games among youth, therefore organized group play if taught at all is developed only among a very small minority. Some attempts at drama are leading towards this group activity, but it will be many years before the change from the individual to the cooperative basis is effectively made.

This emphasis on the individual element in work and play results in the practice of laissez faire. Every person is left to his own misery and ignorance. "Samaritans do not associate with the Jews," is taken as a sufficient philosophy of social relations. However, under the spell of foreign education and the influence of the "moral world" idea, service clubs for boys and girls have been introduced and enthusiastic individuals are taking hold with all the resources at their command. Those who undertake this work are still few in number and trained leaders are badly needed.

There is no present supply adequate to meet the demand.

Wealth is disproportionately in the hands of the very few. This naturally has its effect on young people. A great many start to earn their living before they come to their twelfth year, and there are very few who are not plunged early in life into a world of hardest toil. Thus the Near East boy as he grows into manhood finds it increasingly difficult to maintain interest in social clubs, self-improvement societies, or the movements for young people described above. Thus his opportunity for fullest manhood is handicapped or lost.

Illiteracy still holds the majority in the Near East, though it is much less common now than formerly if males alone are considered. For illiteracy there are many reasons, the chief of which is that elementary education is not compulsory, and in many parts of the Near East is quite inferior in quality, while higher education is very expensive and therefore within the reach of very few. Some governments of the Near East are considering the introduction of compulsory elementary education, and new energies are being released in the interest of public enlightenment, but all the efforts thus far fail to satisfy the common people. They have only revived the hopes of loyal citizens and sincere public servants.

The importance of secular education from the

standpoint of religious education must not be forgotten. There are very few families who take the pains to give their children home instruction in religion. The majority of the present systems of secular education tend to eliminate or at least to lay very little stress on religious education. This makes it essential to have up-to-date mission elementary schools with required religious courses on the curriculum. Such schools would be of untold worth to the community life and would have a great effect on the nation as a whole. This fact puts before our elder brothers and sisters of the West a challenge to relate themselves to a great task.

Elementary education for women is rather worse, for tradition and religious belief have helped to hold back progress in providing education for girls. Much less interest is shown in the improvement of this condition. The high average of illiteracy in the Near East is due to the fact that ninety per cent of all its women are still unable to read or write.

Many villages exist with no schools of any kind, and with only one literate person in the whole population. The difficulty is increased by the fact that the variety of educational agencies at work has thus far prevented any uniformity in the elementary education offered. Egypt has arrived nearest to uniformity, and at present Turkey has reached it to some extent, but in other parts of the Near East, where govern-

ment has little if any control or influence, one can still find a dozen different systems of education, grouped under three general headings: the Latin, the Saxon, and a third, more or less miscellaneous. The pre-war mission elementary schools were fairly satisfactory, but these missions are now seemingly neglecting this phase of their activities, while in some lands neither the people nor the government are ready to replace the educational forces often summarily withdrawn by the missions.

Early in the nineteenth century men trained for government or professional service were very badly needed throughout the Near East, and the foreign mission schools provided for this need. The curricula adopted prepared our youth either for government employment, commercial clerkship, or mediocre teaching positions. When the supply began to exceed the demand, many of these young people, otherwise the hope of our land, emigrated to other countries. We sorely need revision, therefore, in the subject matter of education, to the end that our youth may be better prepared to go back into the communities from which they come, there to participate in every movement for individual and social advance.

Any effort towards helping the nations of the Near East to exploit their natural resources or to make agricultural advances, or any trade schools for the improvement of industry, will in the long run repay a

hundredfold. Introduction of up-to-date methods in trading or in agriculture will yield rich returns.

At present the attraction of art is not much appreciated among our youth. Music, painting, and the poetic charm of nature are too little known in the Near East, and little is done in our schools to cultivate appreciation of them. Any enrichment of the æsthetic education in already existing schools will mean a national refinement of taste and character, and will constitute an effective influence towards the appreciation of all that is good, beautiful and true as the expression of God himself.

Thus far our schools have failed in educating our students to be scientific and systematic. One of the greatest problems before us is just this, and another is to encourage our youth to continue studying after school years and to keep up with the outside world by mental contacts and by reading. Much of the education in the past has been merely an effort to stuff the student with a given amount of knowledge in the shortest possible time. The student has been regarded too often as a sack to be filled and not as a human being to be taught to think for himself.

The problem of encouraging our youth to keep up their interest in reading and in things intellectual after school days suggests the immense possibilities that lie in literature. Our juvenile literature, judged in the light of its moral and educational values, is

very poor. There are many reasons for this. First, authors are few who, whether foreigners or nationals, care enough for the enlightenment and moral development of children to toil over such literature. Second, to those who do care, the literature for children already existing in foreign languages is so abundant that they are tempted to draw on it and too often are satisfied with no more than a literal translation. There is no originality, and in the case of translation, little adaptation. Third, the production of juvenile literature is not a business proposition. There are few who care to buy books for children unless they are needed textbooks. The whole field is therefore unappreciated and neglected.

The existing papers, periodicals and magazines for youth in my own country are of a most wholesome nature. They do not, however, exceed ten in number, and are very limited in their circulation. I dare say that, at the most, only ten per cent of our literate youth read one of them. There are three reasons for this. In the first place, while these periodicals are wholesome, none of them is attractive in general make-up, printing or illustrations. Most are not even clearly printed. Then again, the owners and publishers lack the capital necessary for improvements, and the poverty of readers naturally keeps subscription prices low. Happily, distribution is increasing as the number of literate youth grows and interest in

such literature develops. Then in the third place there is the lack of trained editors. This to my mind is the most important aspect of our literature problem. What has just been said of periodicals for youth applies as well to the publication and sale of books and pamphlets for youth.

One serious situation has arisen with respect to literature in the Near East which we hasten to speak about. It constitutes a real challenge to us, and, we believe, to Christian youth in other lands for their help as well. Booksellers are merchants, and for commercial purposes have introduced to these countries a very undesirable class of cheap books, interesting and attractive in style but destructive in content. The translation of this literature into the various vernaculars has increased its influence. Any efforts made to raise the standard of current reading, to make good books available and to broaden their distribution, will constitute a rewarding work. The nations of the Near East are ready for it, and their youth will welcome it with great enthusiasm.

The Near East, being of great interest to the European Powers, and having a remarkable religious history, draws from outside many classes of people representing a variety of habits and moral attitudes. This has served to introduce certain vices as well as virtues, common elsewhere but not known in the Near East before. Moreover, the economic and social status

of the Near East countries has caused many of our young men to drift to places where they are exposed to these imported vices, and when they return to their own countries they carry back these contagious habits of immorality. Temptations for youth in the Near East were formerly limited in number, and were not of serious consequence to the general physical and social well-being of the nation. Both tradition and the religious atmosphere had their influence in that direction. The youth of the Near East is by nature no more susceptible to vice than the youth of other nations. On the contrary, he was formerly in all his habits more temperate and restrained.

The situation nowadays is totally different and is becoming extremely serious. It has caused interested people to study ways and means by which the youth of the Near East nations can be saved from the evil menace from the West. Thus far little has been done. Egypt is the most progressive of all Near East countries, and has the greatest number of temperance societies and purity clubs, yet Egypt, along with the other nations, stands in great need of such agencies as Sunday schools and the Christian associations. There are a few of these in the countries concerned, but the supply does not meet the demand. There must be more agencies of this sort to take hold of more young people in the Near East and direct them away from both oriental and occidental vices.

Up until the beginning of the present century, a foreigner in Syria, irrespective of his nationality, was looked upon as the ideal example in all phases of life. This was due to the pioneers who came to these countries, full of goodness and kind deeds; doctors, teachers, preachers, nurses, and the like. But now the general impression obtains that this source has been exhausted, because such men are very few compared with the overwhelming multitude of our people in need of service. Does not this constitute a compelling challenge to the Christian youth of the Near East to keep up the reputation and noble work of the early representatives of the people of the West? Will not the youth of the West prove to the Near Eastern youth that occidental vices are not their only exports, but that they export far more of good will, good deeds, good men and good women?

Let me assure the reader that most of the friction, suspicion, enmity and lack of respect between the peoples of the East and the peoples of the West is due to the coming of unworthy Western representatives. If money is to be spent in the interests of peace, and efforts are to be exerted toward securing harmony among nations, let these be directed now toward our youth of the present generation, and the impression that the West is trying to devour the Near East will soon pass away.

When it comes to religion, one can state in general

that the peoples of the Near East are religious. There is no other place in the world where there is so great a variety of organized, loyally practiced religions. There are a dozen sects of Christians among us, two main classes of Jews, three separate groups of Mohammedans, in addition to Druzes, Bahais and smaller religious divisions. This multiplication of sects in large measure accounts for the diversity of ideas and customs in the Near East. Each religious sect gives more or less religious education on behalf of the young people for whom it is responsible, though often it consists mostly of stiff instruction in creeds and dogmas. Some sects even train the children in controversy against other sects.

Let me say frankly that any student of religion would find the great majority of young people in the Near East religiously minded, loyal to their standards, sincere in what they believe. However, many of the religious leaders of our different communions are neither mentally nor spiritually qualified to take advantage of this religious interest in youth. I dare say that in some communities nothing at all is done. The diversity of sects has led to much bigotry and sectarian strife. Religious education under Christian mission agencies of the West tends to increase the present perplexity. What our countries need is a system of religious education that is unified and leads to a practical Christlike life, independent of any dogma

or creed known to be divisive. Such education is sure to gain the appreciation of all and to exert great influence on non-Christians. The present Bible Lands Sunday School Union is struggling towards a unified program in religious education in the lessons it has prepared for Sunday-school use. Unfortunately this embraces only Bible lands thus far. Hopes are great for uniting with Egypt soon.

The evangelical church is ahead of all others in religious education because of its Sunday schools, which are open to all children irrespective of belief. Religious training in these schools includes helping young people to understand and value religion through its practical application to life. But the Sunday schools reach only one child in a thousand of the population. The Sunday-school movement needs trained native personnel, not foreigners, to increase its popularity and improve on old methods. This need calls for men like the good Samaritan, who was willing to sacrifice time, comfort and money. There is no doubt that the youth of the Near East thirst and hunger for religious education.

Let me, before I come to a close, state as a challenge to youth of the West a concern which has been occupying my mind a great deal, and on which I have written a number of articles but, sad to relate, with no response. I refer to the need of work for wayward and defective youth.

There are always some young people who, for one cause or another operating from within or without, cannot adapt themselves to the restrictions and regulations of school. Consequently they cannot keep from being expelled from one school after another. At last they become disappointed and go out into the world full of resentment and ill feeling, carrying this spirit into their community life. In many cases it leads to the commitment of some crime, often followed by imprisonment. I am sure the reader knows the sort of citizens these poor little fellows become after spending a period in prison with criminals of every sort and age. The Near East countries profoundly need helpers who are trained to take in hand such unfortunately misdirected persons and make them better citizens of the world.

Here, then, are some of the problems which the youth of the Near East are confronted with, and for the solution of which they need the cooperation and comradeship of Christian youth in the West. The doors are wide open in the Near East for the investment of life in the great enterprise of bringing in the Kingdom of God.

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